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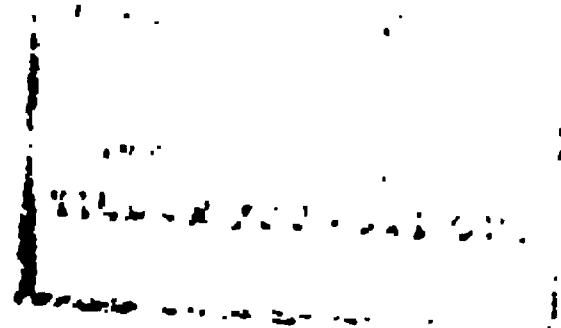
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*John Fiske*

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CHARACTERS IN  
HISTORY

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# Essays

## Historical and Literary

BY

JOHN FISKE

*"Study as if for Life Eternal, live prepared to die to-morrow."*

— MONKISH PROVERB.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

VOLUME I

SCENES AND CHARACTERS IN AMERICAN  
HISTORY

New York

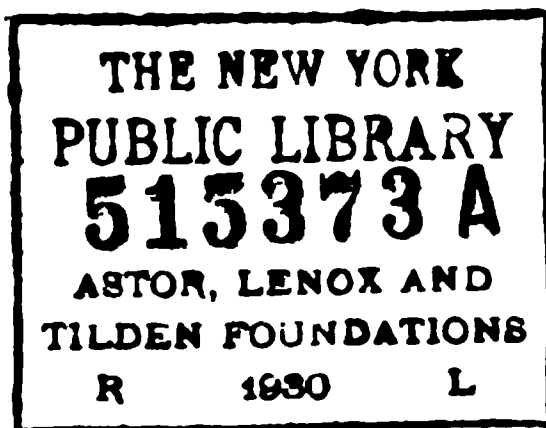
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## INTRODUCTION

THE material in this volume was intended, by the Author, to be embodied in a greater work, A History of the American People. Many of these chapters were given by him as lectures in every part of our broad country, always enlarging and strengthening the bond of friendship with his people—who freely gave him such personal opinions, letters, and private documents as aided him in perfecting his historical work. Some of these letters, of especial significance, I have here included as notes.

Through the courtesy of D. Appleton & Company, I am enabled to reproduce in the essays—Charles Lee, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Andrew Jackson, and Daniel Webster—biographical passages written by the Author for the *Encyclopædia of American Biography*.

ABBY MORGAN FISKE.

WESTGATE,

September 26, 1902.





**I**

**THOMAS HUTCHINSON**

**LAST ROYAL GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS**



# I

## THOMAS HUTCHINSON

### LAST ROYAL GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS

ONE of the most encouraging features of the age in which we live is the rapidity with which the bitter feelings attendant upon a terrible civil war have faded away and given place to mutual friendliness and esteem between gallant men who, less than thirty years ago, withstood one another in deadly strife. Among our public men who hunger for the highest offices, a few Rip van Winkles are still to be found who, without sense enough to realize the folly and wickedness of their behaviour, try now and then to fan into fresh life the dying embers of sectional prejudice and distrust; but their speech has lost its charm, and those that bow the ear to it are few. The time is at hand when we may study the great Civil War of the nineteenth century as dispassionately as we study that of the seventeenth; and the warmest admirer of Cromwell and Lincoln may rejoice in belonging to a race of men that has produced such noble Christian heroes as Lucius, Viscount Falkland, and General Robert Lee. Such a time seems certainly not far off when we see how pleasantly the generals of opposing armies can now sit down and tell their reminiscences, and discuss each other's opinions and conduct in the pages of a popular magazine.

Had the Civil War resulted in dividing the United States into two distinct nations, such an era of reconciliation would, of course, have been long delayed. With most people the sentiment of patriotism, which now extends, however inadequately, over the whole country, would then have become restricted to half of it. It would have been long before an independent Confederacy could have recognized the personal merit of men who strove with might and main to prevent its independence; and it would have been long before the defeated and curtailed United States could have been expected to admire the character or do justice to the motives of those who had shorn it of power and prestige. When one group of people owes its national existence to the military humiliation of another, the situation is very unfavourable for correct historical judgments, and it is apt to fare ill with the reputation of men who have been upon the unpopular side. Such, for the past hundred years, have been the relations between the United States and Great Britain, and accordingly many of the illustrious men of the Revolutionary period are still sadly misunderstood, in the one country if not in the other. The two foremost men of the time, the two that tower above all others in that century, Washington and Chatham, are indeed accepted as heroes in both countries; their fame is the common possession of the English race. The admiration which our British cousins feel for Washington is perhaps even more disinterested than that which we Americans feel for our eloquent defender, Chatham; but in either case the homage is paid to transcendent greatness. In the portraits of too many of the actors upon our Revolutionary scene, the brush of

partisan prejudice has obscured or distorted the true features. To this day British writers are apt to speak of Patrick Henry as a ranting fire-eater, and Samuel Adams as a tricksome demagogue; while upon the pages of American historians may be found remarks that, as applied to such high-minded gentlemen as Burgoyne or Cornwallis, are simply silly.

But of all the men of that day none have fared so ill as the American loyalists. They were not only out of sympathy with the declared policy of their country, but they were on the losing side. As a party they were crushed out of existence, as individuals they were driven into exile by thousands; and for a long time their voice was silenced. Liberal leaders in England, like Fox and Richmond, who hailed with glee the news of each American victory, were equally out of sympathy with the declared policy of their own country; but they were, nevertheless, a power in the land. The unanswerable logic of events was on their side; it was they that could say, "We told you so"; they represented principles that triumphed at Yorktown and were soon to triumph in England. The American loyalists, on the other hand, represented principles that have been irredeemably and forever discredited. They set themselves in opposition to the strongest and most wholesome instinct of the English race, the inborn love of self-government; and they have incurred the fate which is reserved for men who diverge too widely from the progressive movement of the age in which they live. It becomes difficult for the next age to understand them, or to attribute their behaviour to anything but sheer perverseness. Yet among these American loyalists were men of noblest character and



purest patriotism: and we need only to divest ourselves for the moment of the knowledge of subsequent events which in their day none could foresee; we need only to put ourselves back, in imagination, into the circumstances amid which their opinions were formed and their actions determined, in order to do justice to the deep humanity that was in them. We may dissent from their opinions, and disapprove their actions as heartily as ever; but it is our duty, as students of history, to take our stand upon that firm ground where, freed from the fleeting passions of a day, true manliness may be taken for its worth.

Among the American loyalists of the Revolutionary period there is perhaps none who has had such hard measure as Thomas Hutchinson. It may be doubted if any other American in high position, except Benedict Arnold, has ever incurred so much obloquy. But to couple these two names, even for a moment, is gross injustice to the last royal governor of Massachusetts. Alike for intellectual eminence and for spotless purity of character, there have been few Americans more thoroughly entitled to our respect than Thomas Hutchinson. It is sad indeed, though perfectly natural, that such a man should have had to wait a hundred years before his countrymen could come to consider his career dispassionately, and see him in the light in which he would himself have been willing to be seen. Let us take a brief survey of the personal history of this man; and as he belonged to a family distinguished in both the Old World and the New, let us begin with a glance at his ancestry.

In the English literature of the seventeenth century there are few books more charming than the memoirs

of Colonel John Hutchinson of Owthorpe, written by his widow Lucy. Nowhere do we get a pleasanter picture of domestic life in the time of Charles I., or of the personality of a great Puritan soldier, than in those strong pages, glowing with sweet wifely devotion. This John Hutchinson, valiant defender of Nottingham and regicide judge, was eleventh in descent from Bernard Hutchinson, of Cowland, in Yorkshire, a doughty knight of the time of Edward I. From the same Bernard, apparently through Richard of Wyckham, in the sixth generation, in a chain of which one link still awaits complete verification, came Edward Hutchinson, of Alford, in Lincolnshire, who flourished in the reign of Elizabeth, but lived long enough to see hundreds of his friends and neighbours forsake their homes and set forth under Winthrop's leadership to found a colony in Massachusetts Bay. From one of Edward's younger sons are descended the Irish earls of Donoughmore, including the able general who, for overthrowing the remnant of Napoleon's army in Egypt in 1801, was first raised to the peerage as Lord Hutchinson. Edward's eldest son, William, born two years before the defeat of the Spanish Armada, was married in 1612 to Anne Marbury, daughter of a Lincolnshire clergyman, a scion of the distinguished family of Sir Walter Blunt. Anne's mother was sister to Sir Erasmus Dryden, grandfather of the great poet.

William and his wife were warm friends and adherents of John Cotton, rector of St. Botolph's, and after that famous divine had taken his departure for New England, they were not long in following him. William's father, the venerable Edward, had died in 1631; and three years afterward, taking the widowed mother,

Susanna, the wife, and fourteen children, William made his way across the Atlantic to Boston, where he proceeded to build a comfortable house on the site where now stands the Old Corner Bookstore. There, however, he was not destined long to dwell. The Antinomian heresy soon roused such fierce disputes as to threaten the very existence of the colony, and Mrs. Hutchinson, as the leading agitator, was tried for sedition and banished. Early in 1638 the family fled to the Narragansett country, where at first they were fain to seek shelter in a cave. But presently Mr. Hutchinson, with William Coddington and a few faithful followers, bought the island of Aquednek from the Indians for forty fathoms of white wampum, and forthwith the building of the towns of Portsmouth and Newport went on briskly. In 1642, when Mr. Hutchinson died, the outlook for the little colony was dubious. The New England Confederacy was about to be formed, and there were strong hints that the Rhode Island settlements, if they would share in its advantages, must put themselves under the jurisdiction either of Massachusetts or of Plymouth. Absurd and horrible tales were told about Mrs. Hutchinson, and found many believers. There were some who suspected her of being a paramour of Satan, and perhaps the fear of arrest on a charge of witchcraft may have had something to do with her next move. At all events, soon after her husband's death, the poor woman, with most of her children and a few friends, removed to a place since known as Pelham, a few miles west of Stamford and within the tolerant jurisdiction of the New Netherlands. There in the course of the following year they were all cruelly murdered by Indians,

save one little ten-year-old daughter, Susanna, who was ransomed after four years of captivity.

In this wholesale massacre the eldest son, Edward, was not included. At the time of his mother's banishment he was twenty-five years old. He had lately returned from a visit to England, bringing with him a fair young bride who was admitted to communion with the First Church in Boston in December, 1638. While Edward's loyalty to his mother got him so far into trouble that he was heavily fined and sentence of banishment was passed upon him, we may imagine that his wife's orthodoxy may have helped him somewhat in making his peace with the magistrates of the Puritan commonwealth. At any rate he spent the rest of his life in Boston, where for seventeen years he was a deputy in the General Court. He was also the chief commander of horse in the colony, and in the summer of 1675, after the disastrous beginning of King Philip's War, he was sent to Brookfield to negotiate with the Nipmuck Indians. The treacherous savages appointed time and place for a rendezvous, but lay in ambush. For Captain Hutchinson as he approached, and slew him, with several of his company.

Of Edward's twelve children, the eldest son, Elisha, came to be judge of common pleas and member of the council of assistants, and in 1688 was joined with Increase Mather, in London, in protesting against the high-handed conduct of Sir Edmund Andros. One of the earliest recollections of the royal governor was the great pomp of his grandfather Elisha's funeral on a bleak December day of 1717, when the militia companies and the chief dignitaries of the province marched in stately procession to the place of burial. As Elisha

left twelve children, the Hutchinson family in New England was getting to be a large one; and we find many of them in places of distinction and trust. Elisha's eldest son, Thomas, became a wealthy merchant and ship-owner. For twenty-six years he was a member of the council of assistants, and was noted for his resolute integrity and the fearlessness with which he spoke his mind without regard to the effect upon his popularity. He was also noted for a public-spirited generosity so lavish as to have made serious inroads upon his princely fortune. He has been called<sup>1</sup> "one of Boston's greatest benefactors." At his death, in 1739, though still a very rich man, he lamented his inability to provide for his children on a scale commensurate with his wishes. One can readily believe that such families as these men had must have heavily taxed their resources. This Thomas Hutchinson's children were twelve in number, which seems to have been the normal rate of multiplication in that family. His wife, Sarah Foster, a lady of sterling character and sense, was daughter of Colonel John Foster, who took an active part in the insurrection which overthrew the government of Andros. Their fourth child and eldest surviving son, Thomas, most illustrious and in some respects most unhappy of this remarkable family, was born on the 9th of September, 1711, in that stately house in the old north end of Boston to which our attention will by and by again be directed. At five years of age the little Thomas began to con his multiplication table and spelling-book in the North grammar school on Bennet Street, which his father had lately founded, and over the lintel of which were en-

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Porter, "Rambles in Old Boston," p. 205.

graved the arms of the Hutchinsons of Lincolnshire. Thus in daily going out and in at the door, as in the vague wonder of the grandsire's stately funeral, may the thoughtful and impressible child, in somewhat the mood of a generous little prince, have come to feel himself identified with the civic life of Boston. Of adulation for such boys there is usually enough and to spare; but Thomas Hutchinson was not of the sort that is easily spoiled. In the writings of his later years, amid all the storm and stress of a troubled life, nothing is more conspicuous than the absence of personal vanity and the sweetness of temper with which events are judged aside from their bearings upon himself.

In the simple school life of those days there were not so many subjects to be half learned as now, and boys became freshmen at a very tender age. Hutchinson was barely sixteen when he received his bachelor's degree at Harvard, and in after years he frankly confessed that he could not clearly see what he had done to earn it. At first the ledger interested him more than the lexicon. He carried on a little foreign trade by sending ventures in his father's ships, and thus earned enough money to have defrayed the whole cost of his education, while at the same time he became an expert in bookkeeping. In those days Harvard students were graded according to social position. Early in the freshman year a list of names was hung in the college buttery, and those at the top were allowed the best rooms and other privileges. Usually this list remained without change, and it is in this order that the names appear on the triennial catalogue until 1773, when the democratic alphabet took its

place. In the class of 1727, which numbered thirty-seven students, the only names above Hutchinson's were those of the two Brownes, one of whom was afterward son-in-law of Governor Burnet and father of one of the "*mandamus* councillors" of 1774. Another distinguished member of the class was Jonathan Trumbull, the great "war governor" of Connecticut and valued friend of Washington, and according to one tradition, the original "Brother Jonathan."

It was after Hutchinson had left college, and become an apprentice in his father's counting-room, that the scholarly impulse seized and mastered him. He fell in love with the beauties of Latin, and diligently used his leisure evenings until he had become fairly accomplished in that language; to this he soon added a practical knowledge of French. Of history he was always fond. As a child he would rather curl down in the chimney corner and pore over Church's "Indian War" and Morton's "New England Memorial" than coast and snowball with boys in the street; and his Puritan education did not prevent him from shedding tears over the sufferings and death of King Charles. The seventy-fours and frigates that now and then sailed into Boston harbour, stately and beautiful, and symbolic of England's empire, had a special charm for him. In their snug cabins he found agreeable companions, among them Lieutenant Hawke, afterward to be known as one of the greatest of British sea kings. Still pleasanter society was found in the household of a widow lady, with three beautiful daughters, who had lately moved to Boston from Rhode Island. To Margaret Sanford, the second daughter, aged seventeen, Hutchinson was married in 1734. In the course

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of the following year he became a member of the Congregational church on Hanover Street, known at that time as the New Brick Church. Throughout his life he was strictly religious, according to the Puritanism of the eighteenth century, which in Massachusetts had already come to be much more genial and liberal than that of the seventeenth.

Hutchinson's public life began soon after his marriage. In his diary he tells how much pleasure he felt when, in his twenty-sixth year, he was chosen a selectman for the town of Boston, and a few weeks later a representative in the General Court. But his public career was stormy from the outset. The people were then greatly agitated over the question of paper money. As long ago as 1690, upon the return of Sir William Phips from his disastrous expedition against Quebec, Massachusetts had issued promissory notes, called bills of credit, in denominations from 2 s. to £10; they were receivable for sums due to the public treasury. The inevitable results followed. The promissory notes issued by a government which had no cash for paying its debts, and because it had no cash, of course fell in value. Coin was therefore driven from circulation, and there was a great inflation of prices, with frequent and disastrous fluctuations. The disturbance of trade became serious, and then, as always, tricksome demagogues played upon the popular ignorance, which sought a cure for the disease in fresh issues of paper. Pretty much the same nonsense was talked in 1737 as afterward in 1786, and yet again in 1873. The trouble extended over New England, and it is curious to observe, between three of the states, the same differences of attitude as in the great crisis of



1786. In Connecticut the advocates of paper money made but little headway. In 1709 and 1713 bills of credit were issued, but in such small amount and with such judicious and stringent measures for redemption that the depreciation was but slight, and specie payments were resumed with little difficulty. In Rhode Island, on the other hand, rag money won an easy victory, and the resulting demoralization lasted through the century, until after the adoption of the Federal Constitution. In Massachusetts parties were more evenly divided, but whereas in 1786 the advocates of paper were in the minority, in 1737 they had a decided majority. They were the popular party, and especially so after their policy had led to complaints from British merchants trading with Massachusetts, until the royal governor, Jonathan Belcher, was ordered by the Lords of Trade to veto any further issue of bills of credit. A quarrel ensued between Belcher and his legislature, and as the governor proved inexorable, wildcat banking schemes were devised to meet the emergency. The agitation was coming to a crisis when Hutchinson took his seat in the House. Upon all financial questions he had a remarkably clear head, and there was nothing of the demagogue about him. He would not palter with a question of public policy, or seek to hide his opinions in order to curry favour with the people. He was a man to whom strong convictions and dauntless courage had come by inheritance, and as his great-grandfather Edward had stoutly opposed the persecution of the Quakers, so now the great-grandson opposed the paper money delusion with untiring zeal. His conduct was the more noteworthy in that representatives were at that time in Massachu-

setts regarded as mere deputies, in duty bound to give voice to the wishes or whims of the voters that sent them to the legislature. The liberty accorded to them of using their own judgment was narrow indeed. In spite of his independence, Hutchinson was reëlected in 1738; but soon afterward in town meeting a set of instructions were reported, enjoining it upon the representatives of Boston to vote for the further emission of paper. This measure was intended to curb the refractory young man, but it only called him at once to his feet with a powerful speech, in which he denounced the instructions as foolish and wicked, and ended by flatly refusing to obey them. Indignant murmurs ran about the room, and one wrathful voice shouted, "Choose another representative, Mr. Moderator!" But this was too silly; it was not for the presiding officer of a town meeting to seat or unseat representatives. There was no help for it until next year, when Hutchinson, who had been as good as his word, was defeated at the polls. About this time a typhoid fever struck him down, and for several weeks he was at death's door. He had three very eminent physicians, either of whom might have sat for the portrait of Dr. Sangrado, but by dint of an ample inheritance of vitality he withstood both drugs and disease; and presently, taking counsel of a sensible friend, threw physic to the dogs, and recovered strength by means of a judicious diet and horseback rides in the country. One of the doctors lost his temper and stormed about empirics and quacks; the others showed more candour. When Hutchinson found himself able again to attend to business, the general confidence in his uprightness and ability prevailed over the dislike

of his policy, and he was again chosen representative.

In this year, 1740, there was an outburst of excitement in Boston not unlike those that ushered in the Revolutionary War. Of the wildcat banking schemes, two were especially prominent. The one known as the "Specie Bank" undertook to issue £110,000 in promissory notes, to be redeemed at the end of fifteen years in silver at 20 s. per ounce; but it was not altogether clear from what quarter this desirable silver was to come. There is something pathetic about these persistently recurring popular fancies, based on a still surviving faith in that old Norse deity to which our heathen forefathers did reverence as the god *Wish!* The rival scheme, known as the "Land Bank," undertook to issue £150,000 in promissory notes, redeemable at the end of twenty years in manufactures or produce. There were about eight hundred stock-holders, or partners. Each partner mortgaged his house or farm to the company, and in return for this security borrowed the company's notes at three per cent interest. He was to pay each year not only the interest, but one-twentieth part of the principal; and payment might be made either in the same notes or else in merchandise at rates assigned by the directors of the company.<sup>1</sup> The exploit of "basing" a currency on nothing and "floating" it in the air was never more boldly attempted. As a means of transacting business in a commercial society, a note payable in another note, or in whatever commodity might after twenty years happen to be cheapest, must have been a device of scarcely less efficiency than the far-famed philosopher's stone. A man who sold one hundred bushels

<sup>1</sup> Palfrey, IV. 550; Sumner, "American Currency," 29.

of wheat for such a note would have such a precise knowledge of how much it was going to be worth to him! But in financial matters, where the wish is so apt to father the thought, there seems to be no delusion too gross to find supporters. By 1740 the Land Bank and the Specie Bank had both been put into operation, in spite of Governor Belcher, who dissolved the assembly, cashiered colonels, disbenched justices, and turned out office-holders to right and left, for the offence of receiving and passing the notes; and presently a flagrant political issue was raised. Finding that paper professing to represent at least £50,000 had been issued by the Land Bank, the governor appealed to Parliament for help, and in this he was upheld by some of the best men in Massachusetts. This was in Walpole's time, and his Parliaments handled American affairs more delicately than those of George III.; it happened that a new statute expressly for this occasion was not needed. Twenty years before, upon the collapse of the famous South Sea Bubble, an act had been passed forbidding the incorporation of joint stock companies with more than six partners. Parliament now simply declared that this act was always of force in the colonies as well as in Great Britain. The two Massachusetts companies were thus abruptly compelled to wind up their affairs and redeem their scrip; and as the partners were held individually liable, they incurred heavy losses, and would have been quickly ruined if the claims against them had been rigorously pressed. One of the directors of the Land Bank, and perhaps the wealthiest of its partners, was the elder Samuel Adams, deacon of the Old South Church, and one of the justices of the

peace whom Belcher had displaced. A considerable part of his fortune melted away in a moment, so that his famous son, who was that summer in the graduating class at Harvard, may be said in a certain sense to have inherited his quarrel with the British government. It is interesting, in this connection, to remember how, three years later, as a candidate for the master's degree, young Samuel Adams chose as the subject of his Latin thesis the question, "Whether it be lawful to resist the supreme magistrate if the commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved?" and this bold question he answered in the affirmative, while the new royal governor, Shirley, as guest of the college on Commencement Day, sat on the platform and heard him. The question as to the authority of Parliament over the colonies, which had for a moment attracted attention as long ago as 1644, was now more warmly agitated. The friends of the Land Bank loudly denounced the declaratory act of 1740 as a violation of the chartered rights of Massachusetts, and the bitter feelings engendered by this affair must unquestionably be set down among the causes of the American Revolution. Hutchinson's conduct at this time was eminently wise and patriotic. On theory he was then, as always, a firm believer in the ultimate supremacy of Parliament over every part of the British empire. He understood better than most Americans of his day that the supremacy of the crown was figurative rather than real. He believed that if sovereignty over the whole did not reside somewhere, the unity of the empire was virtually at an end; and where else could such sovereignty reside if not in Parliament? At the same time he shared with many other able and thought-

ful men in the fear that, if the protecting hand of Great Britain were once removed, the colonies would either fall a prey to France or Spain, or else would tear themselves to pieces with internecine wars; and who is there that can read the solemn story of the impending anarchy from which Washington and Madison and Hamilton saved the people of these states in the anxious years that followed the victory at Yorktown, and then say that such forebodings were wholly unreasonable. It is easy to be wise after the event; but in distributing the meed of praise and blame, the historian must bear in mind the aspect of things in the times which he seeks to describe, when events, now as familiar as our daily bread, were as yet in the darkness of the future, undreamed of and improbable. Nothing can be clearer to-day than that Hutchinson's fundamental theory was wrong. He failed to take in the situation, and paid so heavy a penalty for his failure that we can well afford to give him due credit for the wisdom and good feeling which in some respects he did show to an eminent degree. Like Dickinson and Burke, he realized that the question of the ultimate supremacy of Parliament was a dangerous one to insist upon. He saw distinctly the foolishness of enlisting such a wholesome feeling as the love of self-government in behalf of such a wretched concern as the Massachusetts Land Bank; and he earnestly advised Governor Belcher to bide his time, and trust in accomplishing its downfall in some other way than by a direct appeal to Parliament. Surely Belcher, as an ambitious politician, undervalued the counsel of this young man of nine and twenty, for the immediate result of his violent conduct was his own downfall;

to appease the popular indignation, the same British government that sustained his policy transferred him to the inferior position of governor of New Jersey, and put William Shirley, a man of more tact, in his place. But the legacy of distrust and discontent remained. This was the first, but not the last, time that serious trouble between England and America was brought about by disregarding Thomas Hutchinson's advice.

In the midst of this controversy Hutchinson was intrusted by his fellow-citizens with an important mission. The boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire had for some time been matter of dispute, and he was sent over to England to adjust the affair. His conduct seems to have been satisfactory, but his diary gives little information as to the details of what he saw and did in the mother country, save that homesickness assailed him, and that in all his life he could not "remember any joy equal to that of meeting his wife again," after an absence of thirteen months. On his return he was chosen representative, and was annually reëlected until 1749. In 1746 and the two following years he was Speaker of the House, and in this capacity he came once more into conflict with popular prejudice, and for a long time to come enjoyed a well-earned triumph. By the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 the stronghold of Louisburg, which New England troops had captured in 1745, was restored to France in exchange for Madras in Hindustan.

In an empire extending over half the globe, it was not always easy to reconcile imperial with local interests. The people of New England were naturally indignant. Their capture of Louisburg was the first

event that awakened Europe to the fact that in the western hemisphere a new military power had come into existence. The place had, moreover, a great strategic value in its relations to New England and Canada, and we can well understand the wrath that greeted the news that this important conquest had been bartered away for a heathen city on the other side of the globe. To appease the popular indignation, Parliament voted that adequate compensation should be made for the expense of the capture of Louisburg. The sum due to Massachusetts in pursuance of this vote was £138,649, which was nearly equivalent to the total amount of paper then circulating in the colony at its current valuation of one-eleventh of its face value. To attempt to raise such a currency to par was hopeless. Hutchinson proposed in the assembly that Parliament should be asked to send over the money in Spanish dollars, which should be used to buy up and cancel the paper at eleven for one. Whatever paper remained after this summary process should be called in and redeemed by direct taxation, and any issue of paper currency in future was to be forbidden. "This rather caused a smile," says the diary, "few apprehending that he was in earnest; but upon his appearing very serious, out of deference to him as Speaker, they appointed a committee." After a year of hard work, Hutchinson's bill was passed, amid the howls and curses of the people of Boston. "Such was the infatuation that it was common to hear men wish the ship with the silver on board might sink in her passage." They wanted no money but rag money. At the election in 1749 Hutchinson was defeated by a great majority, but was imme-



diately chosen a member of the council. People soon found, to their amazement, that a good hard dollar had much greater purchasing power than a scrap of dirty paper worth about nine cents; and it was further observed that, when an inferior currency was once out of the way, coin would remain in circulation. The revival of trade was so steady and so marked that the tide of popular feeling turned, and Hutchinson was as much praised as he had before been abused. His services at this time cannot be rated too highly. To his clear insight and determined courage it was largely due that Massachusetts was financially able to enter upon the Revolutionary War. In 1774 Massachusetts was entirely out of debt, and her prosperity contrasted strikingly with the poverty-stricken condition of Rhode Island, which persisted in its issues of inconvertible paper. It was then that the West India trade of Massachusetts, a considerable part of which had hitherto been carried on through Newport, was almost entirely transferred to Boston and Salem.

About this time Hutchinson was cherishing an intention of giving up all mercantile business and dealing but little more with practical politics. On the summit of Milton Hill, seven miles south of Boston, in one of the most charming spots in all that neighbourhood, he had built a fine house, which still stands there, though largely reconstructed. Sitting at its broad windows, or walking upon the velvet lawn under the shade of arching trees, one gets entrancing views of the Neponset River, with its meadows far below, and of the broad expanse of the harbour studded with its islands and cheery with white-winged ships. To this earthly paradise, Hutchinson, having

passed his fortieth birthday, was hoping soon to retreat with his wife and children, there to spend the remainder of his days in his favourite historical studies and in rural pursuits. Like two eminent historians of our own time, Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Parkman, he was an expert at gardening and had a passion for flowers. But it is not so easy to tear oneself away from public life. In the spring of 1752, the death of his uncle, Edward Hutchinson, left vacant the offices of judge of probate and justice of common pleas for the county of Suffolk, and the nephew accepted an appointment to fill these places. Two years afterward he met with an overwhelming affliction in the sudden death of his wife, at the age of thirty-seven. For twenty years their life had been so happy that the remembrance of it kept him ever after from the mere thought of another marriage. He now sought relief from sorrow in increased devotion to public affairs. In that same year, 1754, he was one of the delegates to the memorable Congress at Albany, where he was associated with Franklin on the committee for drawing up a plan of union for the thirteen colonies. It is pleasant for a moment to see these two eminent men working together in a friendly spirit, little dreaming of their future estrangement. For the conception of the famous Albany Plan, Hutchinson gives the credit entirely to Franklin. At that time the views of the two were in harmony. No one had as yet thought seriously of such a thing as separation from the British empire. If this sagacious scheme for a federal union of the thirteen colonies, with a parliament or grand council of their own, a viceroy appointed by the crown, and local self-government guaranteed to the people,

could have been once put into successful operation, the history of the next half-century would have been very different from what it was. There would probably have been no Stamp Act, no Committees of Correspondence, no Boston Tea Party, perhaps no Revolution. It is idle to pursue such speculations. A general acquaintance with history would lead one to doubt if, under a federal union thus formed, and hampered by connection with a remote imperial government, the political career of the American people could have been worked out with as much success as that which we have actually witnessed. But we need not go so far as this, inasmuch as any plan whatever for a federal union, in 1754, was premature and impracticable. Men like Franklin and Hutchinson might see the desirableness of such a thing, but people in general did not see it. The time for constructive national politics on this grand scale had not arrived; and probably nothing but hardship would have brought it. It is only through pain that higher and higher forms of life, whether individual or social, are evolved.

In 1757 Shirley was succeeded in the governorship of Massachusetts by Thomas Pownall, and the next year Hutchinson was appointed lieutenant-governor. Under the management of William Pitt the fortunes of the world-wide war against France were now suddenly changed. "We are obliged to ask every day," said Horace Walpole, "what new victory there is, for fear of losing one." Hutchinson's energy and popularity made him of great service in calling out the military resources of Massachusetts, and in these campaigns the province began to awaken to a consciousness of

its strength. Pownall stayed only till 1760, when he was replaced by Francis Bernard, who, soon afterward, on the death of Stephen Sewall, appointed Hutchinson chief justice of Massachusetts, much to the disgust of the elder James Otis, who desired the position and expected to obtain it. In later days Hutchinson was charged with greed of office, because he was at once judge of probate, member of the council, chief justice, and lieutenant-governor. Still later the charge of avarice has been thoughtlessly added by writers forgetful of the facts that he was liberal in money matters, far too rich to be attracted by the meagre salaries of these laborious offices, and as a scholar somewhat inclined to be miserly of his time. The explanation is rather to be found in his inheritance of public spirit and rare ability, combined with the general favour won by genial manners and unblemished purity of life. For twenty years he was the popular idol of Massachusetts, and was wanted for all sorts of things. There may seem something strange in appointing to the chief justiceship a man who had not practised at the bar, instead of a lawyer so eminent as Otis. But Hutchinson's eight years' service as judge of a county court had shown that, along with a judicial temper, he possessed an extraordinarily wide and accurate knowledge of law; and when Bernard appointed him chief justice he did so at the earnest request of several leading members of the bar, headed by Jeremiah Gridley, one of the greatest lawyers of that age.

On a December day of 1760, soon after this appointment was made, the news came to Boston that King George II. was dead and his youthful grandson had

ascended the throne as George III. No one could then have dreamed what this announcement portended. But soon there followed the news of Pitt's resignation, and the next three years saw the abandonment of the whole grand policy in support of which British and American troops had for the last time stood side by side, and its replacement by that domestic struggle for supremacy between the king and the Whig families, out of which grew some of the immediate causes of the American Revolution. In the year 1761 there appeared in the horizon the little cloud like unto a man's hand which came before the storm. This was the famous argument on the writs of assistance enabling revenue officers to enter houses and search for smuggled goods. In this case, in which Hutchinson presided and Gridley appeared for the crown officers, the younger James Otis made the startling and prophetic speech in which he showed successfully that the issue of such writs was contrary to the whole spirit of the British constitution. According to the letter of the law, however, the case was not so clear. Such general search-warrants had been allowed by a statute of Charles II., another statute of William III. in general terms here granted to revenue officers in America like powers to those they possessed in England, and neither of these statutes had been repealed. As to the legality of the writs there was room for doubt; and Hutchinson accordingly suspended judgment until the next term, in order to obtain information from England as to the present practice there. In accordance with advice from the law officers of the crown, the writs were finally granted. Here, as in other yet weightier matters which were

hereafter to come up for fierce debate, it was becoming apparent that the real question was concerned with something even more fundamental than the interpretation of the law. The real question was whether Americans were bound to obey laws which they had no voice in making. An out-and-out issue upon this point was something that Hutchinson dreaded as anxiously as Clay and Calhoun, in their different ways, dreaded an out-and-out issue upon the slavery question. He earnestly deprecated any action of Parliament which should encroach upon American self-government; and by the same token he frowned upon such action on the part of his fellow-citizens as might irritate Parliament, and provoke it into asserting its power. Should the issue be raised, he felt that the choice was between anarchy and submission to Parliament, and that the very love which he bore to Massachusetts must urge him to a course that was likely to deprive him of the esteem of valued friends, and heap cruel imputations upon his character and motives. Such questions of conflicting allegiance have no pity for men in high positions. They were fraught with sorrow to Thomas Hutchinson as to Robert Lee, and many another noble and tender soul.

It was natural, therefore, that when the Grenville ministry began to talk about a stamp act, Hutchinson should have done his best to dissuade them from such a rash measure. Here, as before, if his advice had been taken, much trouble might have been avoided. As a high public official, however, he could not with propriety blazon forth what he was doing, and many people misunderstood him. He condemned the resistance which was beginning to organize itself under

the leadership of Samuel Adams, as tending inevitably toward counter-resistance and strife. Such an attitude was liable to be interpreted as indicating tacit approval of the Stamp Act. At this juncture an unfortunate incident served to direct upon him the rage of the rough populace that swarmed about the wharves and waterside taverns of the busy seaport. The enforcement of the Navigation Acts had already made much trouble in Boston, and in more than one instance warehouse doors had been barricaded and the officers successfully defied. Governor Bernard had become very unpopular through his zeal in promoting seizures for illicit trade, which he was supposed to have made quite profitable by his share in the forfeitures. In the ordinary course of business concerning these matters, depositions were made before Chief Justice Hutchinson, and attested by him. In Bernard's reports to the Lords of Trade, such depositions were sometimes sent over to London as evidence of the state of affairs, and were placed on file at the Plantation Office. There it happened that Briggs Hallowell, a Boston merchant, saw some of these documents in which John Rowe and others of his fellow-citizens were mentioned by name as smugglers. Reports of this reached Boston in the summer of 1765, on the very eve of the Stamp Act riots.

The house in which Hutchinson still continued to dwell when in town was his father's home, where he had been born. It stood between Garden Court and Hanover Street, next to the house of Sir Harry Frankland, in a neighbourhood from which the glory has long since departed. At that time it was probably the noblest dwelling-house in America, for along with

its rich furnishings and works of art it contained the superb library which its owner had for thirty years been collecting, and which included many precious manuscripts illustrating our early history,—documents for a sight of which to-day the historical student would deem their weight in diamonds a cheap price. On the oaken desk which stood amid these crowded shelves the ink was hardly dry upon the last pages of the second volume of that “History of Massachusetts” which remains to-day one of the most admirable histories ever written by an American. The first volume, bringing the story down to the accession of William III., was published in 1764; the second, continuing the narrative to 1750, was now about to go to press, when riot and confusion burst in upon the scene. On the 14th of August the Sons of Liberty paraded through the streets, in just and rightful expression of indignation at the Stamp Act. Nothing violent was done, though the beams of a house just going up, and supposed to be intended for a stamp office, were pulled down and used for a bonfire. By the next night more disreputable elements were at work. A mob surrounded Hutchinson’s house, and shouted to him to come out and deny, if he could, that he had advised and abetted the Stamp Act. But this he refused to do. It was not for him to yield to a demand made in such a spirit. Upon compulsion, he, like Gabriel Varden, would do nothing. An aged merchant hereupon harangued the crowd, and assured them that they were quite in the wrong; Mr. Hutchinson disapproved the Stamp Act, and was in no wise responsible for it. So for that night all passed quietly, but during the next week vague, ill-




understood rumours from London wrought their effect upon the mob. On the night of the 26th a bonfire in King Street gathered a crowd together. First they broke into the cellars of the comptroller of customs, and drank freely from the rum and brandy casks stored there. Then a fury for punishing informers seized them, and they rushed to the chief justice's house. A few blows with broadaxes split the doors and window-shutters, and the howling, cursing rabble swarmed in. Their approach had been heard some minutes before, and Hutchinson had told his children to flee; but his eldest daughter refused to go without him, and while she was expostulating with him, the doors were broken in. Carrying her in his arms, he fled across the garden to the house of his brother-in-law, the Rev. Samuel Mather, leaving the mob in full possession. Pictures were cut to pieces, mirrors smashed, wearing apparel and silver stolen, and priceless books and manuscripts flung into the street. The halts made from time to time in the well-stocked winebins served to keep up and enhance the fury, until before daybreak even the partition walls had been partly torn down, and great breaches had been hacked in the brickwork. By sunrise the crowd had dispersed, and friendly hands had begun searching for the treasures of the ruined library. The manuscript of the second volume of the history, scattered hither and thither, and drenched in a midnight shower, was picked up and carefully put together by the Rev. Andrew Eliot, so that the author found little difficulty in restoring it, and it was published two years later.

The next morning, before Governor Bernard could summon the council, a huge town meeting in Faneuil

Hall declared by a unanimous vote its abhorrence of the shameful work of the night. It was the opening day of the session of court, and the chief justice, whose wardrobe had perished, came to the bench in his loose-gown, and with the quiet dignity that never deserted him pointed out to the crowded audience the wickedness of the misunderstanding of which he had been made the victim. Court adjourned till order could be restored. Town meetings throughout Massachusetts condemned the mob. Several ringleaders were arrested and sent to jail, but another mob released them. The disorder was not fully abated until the 9th of September, when news came from England that the Grenville ministry had fallen. The advent of Lord Rockingham as prime minister gave hope that the Stamp Act policy would be reconsidered, and for two years quiet was restored in America. A bill for the relief of persons who had suffered from the riots was passed by the Massachusetts assembly, and Hutchinson's damages were repaired, so far as might be, in money. The loss of materials for the student of American history was something that could never be repaired.

In the year of the Stamp Act Samuel Adams was chosen a member of the legislature. The exclusion of crown officers from a seat in either branch of that body had for some time been one of his favourite ideas, and in 1766 he so far succeeded in realizing it that Hutchinson, with four others, failed to be elected to the council. The last two years of Bernard's administration, 1768 and 1769, were full of strife and bitterness. The news of Charles Townshend's measures led to the famous resolutions of 1768 and the circular letter inviting the other colonies to resistance. Then

came the demand from the ministry that the circular letter should be rescinded, to which the Massachusetts assembly replied with a flat refusal, and was forthwith turned out of doors by the governor. Then, in order to catch Samuel Adams and carry him to England for trial, there was the revival of a half-forgotten act of Henry VIII., about treason committed beyond sea. The two regiments which were landed in Boston in the autumn of 1768 came at Bernard's solicitation, to aid the crown officers in preserving order. Such an event as the sacking of Hutchinson's house went far toward creating an impression in England that such assistance was necessary. The intention of the government in sending the troops was no doubt innocent enough; but it would have been hard to hit upon a more dangerous measure, or one revealing a more hopeless ignorance of the American character. It could not be regarded otherwise than as a threat, and it put Great Britain into somewhat the attitude of a man who, in the course of an argument with his friend, suddenly draws a pistol. An intelligent and disinterested government might have asked itself the question whether it were a wise policy to keep up an odious revenue law that in such an orderly town as Boston made it necessary to introduce soldiers to prevent disorder. But not only was the government neither intelligent nor disinterested, but it was entirely natural to argue that a town whose magistrates could not prevent the sacking of private houses did not deserve to be called an orderly town. As for Hutchinson himself, he would have been more than human if such considerations had not coloured his own view of the case, although the serenity and sweetness of temper



with which, in his history, as also in his private diary, he speaks of his personal hardships, are very remarkable. The pages of these charming books show the thoroughbred Christian gentleman. But as a statesman he was far from reading the temper of the people correctly. He *knew* that in the violence which touched him so nearly the sympathy of the people was not with the rioters. He *felt* that all the troubles were due to the unreasonable obstinacy of a few such men as James Otis and Samuel Adams; and that if these men could be defeated, the general sense of the people would be in favour of peace and quiet. In this opinion he misconceived the facts of the situation very much as they are misconceived to-day by such well-meaning British writers as Mr. Lecky and Mr. Goldwin Smith. With all their fairness toward America, these writers are still blind to the fact that the issues raised by George III. and his ministers — in the Stamp Act of 1765, in the Townshend acts of 1767, in the measures concerning the salaries of crown officers in 1772, and finally in the vindictive acts of 1774 after the Boston Tea Party — were one and all of them such issues as the Americans could not for a moment accept without shamefully abandoning the principles of free government for which the whole English race has been manfully striving since the days of Magna Charta. If British historians, sincerely desirous of doing justice to America, find it hard to understand these things to-day, perhaps it was not strange that some able men like Hutchinson did not understand them at a time when the baleful policy and selfish aims of George III. were still dimly viewed through the mists of contemporary prejudice and passion. Hutchinson's own

views were thus expressed in a private letter to a friend in Dublin, early in 1772, "It is not likely that the American colonies will remain part of the British dominion another century, but while they do remain, the supreme absolute legislative power must remain entire, to be exercised upon the colonies so far as is necessary for the maintenance of its own authority and the general weal of the empire, and no farther." This was moderately expressed ; probably at that moment neither Dickinson nor Franklin would have taken serious exception to it. Yet the argument could not be pushed without involving the surrender of the American cause. It does not appear that Hutchinson was anxious to push it, or that he courted the position of chief upholder of Toryism in America; but the attitude of mind that went naturally along with his official position could hardly fail to drive him in this direction. In the summer of 1769 Governor Bernard was recalled to England, to appease the people of Massachusetts, while his own feelings were assuaged with a baronetcy. Before his ship had weighed anchor in the harbour, the sound of clanging bells and booming cannon told him of the fierce rejoicings over his departure. The administration of affairs was left in the hands of Hutchinson as lieutenant-governor, and it was not long before the course of events was such as to show, with vivid and startling suddenness, the false position into which he was drifting. In the fatal squabble between soldiers and townspeople on that memorable moonlit evening in March, 1770, he showed vigour and discretion, and but for his prompt arrest of the offending soldiers the affair might have grown into something which it would have been no misnomer

to call a "massacre." But next morning, when he looked out from the window of the town house, and saw the surging crowd of people in King Street, on their way from Faneuil Hall to the Old South Church, and when he exclaimed that their spirit seemed to be as high as that of their ancestors when they rose against Andros, one cannot but wonder if his thoughts did not go back for a moment to the winter day when as a little child he had stood by the grave of the grandfather who had stoutly opposed that agent of tyranny. Did it seem quite right for the grandson, with whatsoever honest intent, to be standing in Andros's place? A few hours later, when Samuel Adams, for the second time that day, came into the council chamber, with the final message from the people, and with uplifted finger solemnly commanded Hutchinson to remove all soldiery from Boston, the king's representative obeyed. That his knees trembled and his cheeks grew pale, as Adams afterward told, we may well believe. Not from fear, however, but more likely from a sudden sickening sense of the odium of his position. Not long afterward he wrote to London, asking to be relieved of all further share in the work of administration. But before the letter was received his commission as royal governor of Massachusetts had been drawn up. Lord North was at this time earnest in the wish to pursue a conciliatory policy, and Hutchinson was appointed governor because it was supposed that the people would prefer his administration. Indeed, except for the unfortunate affray in King Street, the departure of Bernard already seemed to have done much to clear the air. After the troops had been sent out to the Castle, there was a general sense of relief, and many

people entertained hopes that the troubles were over. In reply to Hutchinson's letter, the ministry told him to take his own time to consider whether or not he would accept the appointment; and it was during this lull in the storm, toward the end of 1770, that he decided to accept it. He might well believe that under his own management of affairs fewer occasions for dissension would arise. When the storm arose again, it burst from a quarter where no one would have looked for it.

For the two years following the so-called "Boston Massacre," Hutchinson's administration was comparatively quiet. In the summer of 1772 the excitement again rose to fever heat, over the royal order that the salaries of the judges should henceforth be paid by the crown. This measure, striking directly at the independence of the judiciary, led Samuel Adams to the revolutionary step of organizing the famous Committees of Correspondence. Hutchinson at first underestimated the importance of this step, but presently, taking alarm at the progress which resistance to the government was making, he tried to check it by a sober appeal to reason. In January, 1773, he sent a message to the legislature, containing an elaborate and masterly statement of the doctrine of the supremacy of Parliament over the whole British empire. It was a document of prodigious learning and written in excellent temper. Its knowledge of law was worthy of Lord Mansfield, who expressed the warmest admiration for it. It was widely read on both sides of the Atlantic, and Whigs as well as Tories admitted its power. But Hutchinson's great antagonist was equal to the occasion. Never did the acuteness, the strong

sense, and the dialectic skill of Samuel Adams show to better advantage than in the reply which he drew up for the legislature. Its force was such as to make the governor doubt whether he had done wisely, after all, in opening an argument on the subject. He sent in an elaborate rejoinder, to which Adams again replied, and for some time the controversy was sustained with dignity on both sides. Whatever opinions were held as to the merits of the arguments, the governor certainly gained in personal popularity during the winter, and still more in the spring, when he met the governor of New York at Hartford, and succeeded in adjusting the long-disputed boundary line between New York and Massachusetts, to the entire satisfaction of the latter colony.

This was the last moment of popular favour that Hutchinson was ever to know. The skein of events that were to compass his downfall had already unwound itself in London. For several years a private and unofficial correspondence had been kept up between Hutchinson and other officers of the crown in Massachusetts, on the one hand, and Thomas Whately, who had formerly been private secretary to George Grenville, on the other. Whately was a friend to America, and disapproved of the king's policy. Besides Hutchinson, the chief writers were his brother-in-law, Andrew Oliver, who was now associated with him as lieutenant-governor, and Charles Paxton, one of the revenue officers in Boston. In these letters Hutchinson freely commented on the policy of Samuel Adams and other popular leaders as seditious in tendency; he doubted if it were practicable for a colony removed by three thousand miles of ocean to enjoy all the liberties of




the mother country without severing its connection with her; and he had therefore reluctantly come to the conclusion that Massachusetts must submit to "an abridgment of what are called English liberties." In this there was nothing that he had not said again and again in public, and amply explained in his famous message to the assembly. But Oliver went farther, and urged that judges and other crown officers should have fixed salaries assigned and paid by the crown, so as to become independent of popular favour. Paxton enlarged upon the turbulence of the people of Boston, and thought two or three regiments needful for preserving order. The letters were written independently on different occasions, and the suggestions were doubtless made in perfect good faith. In June, 1772, Thomas Whately died, and all his papers passed into the custody of William, his brother and executor. In the following December, before William Whately had opened or looked over the packet of letters from Massachusetts, it was found that they had been purloined by some person unknown. It is not certain that the letters had ever really passed into William Whately's hands. They may have been left lying in some place where they may have attracted the notice of some curious busybody, who forthwith laid hands upon them. This has never been satisfactorily cleared up. At all events they were carried to Dr. Franklin, as containing political intelligence that might prove important. Franklin was then the agent at the British court, representing Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Georgia. The dispute over the salaries of the judges was then raging in Massachusetts. The judges had been threatened with impeachment should

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they dare to receive a penny from the royal treasury, and at their head was Andrew Oliver's younger brother Peter, chief justice of Massachusetts. As agent for the colony, Franklin felt it his duty to give information of the contents of the letters now laid before him. Although they purported to be merely a private correspondence, it appeared to him that they were written by public officers to a person in public station, on public affairs, and intended to procure public measures; their tendency, he thought, was to incense the mother country against her colonies. Franklin was doubtless mistaken in this, but he felt as Walsingham might have felt on suddenly discovering, in private and confidential papers, the clew to some popish plot against the life of Queen Elizabeth. From the person who brought him the letters he got permission to send them to Massachusetts, on condition that they should be shown only to a few people in authority, that they should not be copied or printed, that they should presently be returned, and that the name of the person from whom they were obtained should never be disclosed. This last condition was thoroughly fulfilled. The others must have been felt to be mainly a matter of form; it was obvious that, though they might be literally complied with, their spirit would inevitably be violated. The letters were sent to the proper person, Thomas Cushing, speaker of the Massachusetts assembly, and he showed them to Hancock, Hawley, and the two Adamses. To these gentlemen it could have been no new discovery that Hutchinson and Oliver held such opinions as were expressed in the letters; but the documents seemed to furnish tangible proof of what had long been vaguely sur-

mised, that the governor and his lieutenant were plotting against the liberties of Massachusetts. They were soon talked about at every town meeting and on every street corner. The assembly twitted Hutchinson with them, and asked for copies of these and other such papers as he might see fit to communicate. He replied, somewhat sarcastically, "If you desire copies with a view to make them public, the originals are more proper for the purpose than any copies." Mistaken as Hutchinson's policy was, his conscience acquitted him of any treasonable purpose, and he must naturally have preferred to have people judge him by what he had really written, rather than by vague and distorted rumours. His reply was taken as sufficient warrant for printing the letters, and they were soon in the possession of every reader in England or America who could afford sixpence for a political tract. On the other side of the Atlantic they aroused as much excitement as on this, and William Whately became concerned to know who could have stolen the letters. On very slight evidence he charged a Mr. Temple with the theft, and a duel ensued, in which Whately was dangerously wounded. Hearing of this affair, Franklin published a card, in which he avowed his own share in the transaction, and in a measure screened everybody else by drawing the full torrent of wrath and abuse upon himself. All the ill-suppressed spleen of the king's friends was at once discharged upon him.

Meanwhile in Massachusetts the excitement was furious. The autumn of 1773 had arrived, and with it Lord Dartmouth's tea ships, and Hutchinson was brought into an attitude of hostility to the people such



as he could not have foreseen when he accepted the governorship. It was mainly his stubborn courage that kept the consignees of the tea from resigning their commissions in Boston, as the consignees in New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston had done. This made Boston the battle-ground upon which the tea question was to end in a flat defiance of the British government. Hutchinson tried to avoid the difficulty by advising the consignees to order the vessels on their arrival to anchor below the Castle, so that if it should seem best not to land the tea they might go to sea again. When the first ship arrived, she was anchored accordingly, but it happened that she had other goods on board which some merchants in town were needing, and a committee, headed by Samuel Adams, ordered the captain to bring his ship to dock, in order to land these goods. This brought the vessel within the jurisdiction of the custom-house, and when the officers refused to give her a clearance until she had landed the tea also, there was no way of getting her out to sea without a pass from the governor. But Hutchinson felt that granting a pass for a ship until she had been duly cleared at the custom-house would be a violation of his oath of office. The situation was thus a complete deadlock, and for the popular party there was no way out except in the destruction of the tea.

The antagonism between governor and people, which thus culminated in the first great crisis of the American Revolution, had been immeasurably enhanced by the adroit use which had been made of the Whately letters. One cannot, in this particular, view the conduct of Samuel Adams and his friends with entire approval.

As Dr. Ellis has well said, it was a case of "the most vehement possible cry with the slightest possible amount of wool." Strong emphasis was laid upon the phrase "abridgment of what are called English liberties," and serious injustice was done by tearing it from its context. Nothing could show this more clearly than the governor's own frank and manly statement: "I differ in my principles from the present leaders of the people. . . . I think that by the constitution of the colonies the Parliament has a supreme authority over them. I have nevertheless always been an advocate for as large a power of legislation within each colony as can consist with a supreme control. I have declared against a forcible opposition to the execution of acts of Parliament which have laid taxes on the people of America; I have, notwithstanding, ever wished that such acts might not be made as the Stamp Act in particular. I have done everything in my power that they might be repealed. I do not see how the people in the colonies can enjoy every liberty which the people in England enjoy, because in England every man may be represented in Parliament . . . ; but in the colonies, the people, I conceive, cannot have representatives in Parliament to any advantage. It gives me pain when I think it must be so. I wish also that we may enjoy every privilege of an Englishman which our remote situation will admit of. These are sentiments which I have without reserve declared among my private friends, in my speeches and messages to the General Court, in my correspondence with the ministers of state, and I have published them to the world in my history; and yet I have been declared an enemy and a traitor to my country

because in my private letters I have discovered the same sentiments, for everything else asserted to be contained in those letters (I mean of mine) unfriendly to the country, I must deny as altogether groundless and false." By this last qualification the governor shows himself aware of the cruel injustice wrought in holding him responsible for everything that Paxton and Oliver had said. The letters, when published together in a single pamphlet, were read as containing from first to last the sentiments of Hutchinson. In the popular excitement the fact that they were not all his letters was lost sight of; and by a wild leap of inference not uncommon in such cases, people soon reached the conclusion that the conduct of the British government for the past ten years had been secretly instigated by him; that he was to blame for the Stamp Act, the sending of troops to Boston, the tea measures, and everything. It was this misunderstanding that heaped upon Hutchinson's name the load of opprobrium which it has had to carry for a hundred years. His mistaken political attitude would not of itself have sufficed to call forth such intense bitterness of feeling. The erroneousness of his policy is even clearer to us than to his contemporaries, for with the lapse of time it has been more and more completely refuted by the unanswerable logic of events. But we can also see how grievously he was misjudged, since we know that he was not the underhanded schemer that men supposed him to be. Never has there been a more memorable illustration of the wrong and suffering that is apt to be wrought in all directions in a period of revolutionary excitement than the fact that during the autumn of 1773 one of the purest and most high-

mindful citizens of Massachusetts was regarded by so many other pure and high-minded citizens as little better than a traitor. Acting upon this belief the assembly, sometime before the crisis of the Tea Party, had already despatched a memorial across the ocean, beseeching his Majesty to remove Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant-governor Oliver from office.

In January, 1774, the petition was laid before the privy council, in the presence of a large and brilliant gathering of spectators. Never before had so many lords been seen in that chamber at one time. The Archbishop of Canterbury was there, and Lord Shelburne, and Edmund Burke; and there, too, were to be seen the illustrious Dr. Priestley and youthful Jeremy Bentham. At the head of the table sat the Lord President Gower, and in the chimney corner stood an old man of eight and sixty, with spectacles and flowing wig, dressed in a suit of dark Manchester velvet. This was Dr. Franklin, to whose part it fell, as agent for the Massachusetts assembly, to present its petition. The news of the Boston Tea Party had just arrived in London, and people's wrath waxed hot against the Americans. The solicitor-general, David Wedderburn, instead of discussing the petition on its merits, broke out with a scurrilous invective against Franklin, whom he accused, if not of actually stealing the Whately letters, at least of basely meddling with private correspondence from the lowest of motives, to get Hutchinson dismissed from office and secure for himself the governorship of Massachusetts. Such a man, said Wedderburn, has forfeited forever the respect of his fellow-creatures, and should never dare

again to show his face in society, — this man of letters, forsooth! “a man of three letters.” At this obvious allusion to the old Roman slang expression preserved in Plautus, where “a man of three letters” is *f-u-r*, a thief, there were loud cries of “Hear, hear!” Of the members of government present, Lord North alone preserved his unfailing decorum; the others laughed and applauded, while Franklin stood as unmoved as the moon at the baying of dogs. His conduct had, perhaps, been hardly defensible, and it had probably worked more harm than good, but his conscience was certainly quite clear; and he could not but despise the snarls of such a cur as Wedderburn, whom the king, while fain to use him as a tool, felt free to call the biggest knave in the realm. Ralph Izard, the hot-blooded South Carolinian, who listened to the insulting speech, afterward declared that if it had been aimed at him, he would have answered on the spot with a challenge. Lord Shelburne wrote to Lord Chatham that the indecency of the affair was such as would have disgraced an ordinary election contest. Before the meeting was adjourned, Wedderburn stepped up to say good-morning to Dr. Priestley; but the great man of science, kindest and most gentle of mortals, indignantly turned his back. Ah, quoth Immanuel Kant, in his study at distant Königsberg, as he smoked his evening pipe and listened to the story, we have heard before how Prometheus, who brought fire from heaven, was teased by an unclean bird. The affair ended as might have been foreseen. The Massachusetts petition was not simply rejected, but condemned as scandalous; and next day Franklin was dismissed from his office of postmaster-general for America.



Events, however, soon brought about practically Hutchinson's removal. When in April Parliament made up its mind, in retaliation for the Tea Party, to annul the charter of Massachusetts and starve the town of Boston into submission, it was clear that such a man as Hutchinson would not serve the purpose. For such measures of martial law a soldier was likely to be needed, and the work was intrusted to Thomas Gage. This change afforded Hutchinson the opportunity he had for some time desired, of going to England in the hope of doing something toward putting an end to these dreadful quarrels and misunderstandings. Of the retaliatory measures he profoundly disapproved, and could he but meet the king face to face, he hoped that his plea for Massachusetts might prove not ineffectual. When on the morning of the first of June, 1774, he left his charming home in Milton, without the slightest premonition that he was never to see it again, it was in the spirit of a peacemaker that he embarked for England, but there were many who saw in it the flight of a renegade. It was not in a moment, however, that this view prevailed. In spite of all the bitter conflict and misunderstanding that had come to pass, a character so noble as Hutchinson's could not all at once lose its hold upon honest men and women who had known him for years in the numberless little details of life that do not make a figure in political history. The governor's heart was cheered, even if his forebodings were not quieted, by formal addresses from some of the leading townsmen of Milton and Boston, in which his many services to the commonwealth received their full meed of affectionate acknowledgment. But events were now moving fast, and

relations among men were to be whirled hither and thither as in a cyclone. Most of these addressers were soon to be judged as Tories and condemned to outer darkness. Those of us who remember the four years following 1860, remember how lax men's memories are of some things, how tenacious of others. So the guns of Lexington and Bunker Hill soon left little of Hutchinson's reputation standing, save that which the last two years had brought him. The house at Milton was used as barracks for soldiers; the portrait of its owner, now in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, was slashed and torn by bayonets; all his accessible property was confiscated, and his best coach was sent over to Cambridge for the use of General Washington. Even so late as 1774 a little town in the highlands of Worcester County was incorporated under the name of Hutchinson, but two years later, on its earnest petition, the legislature allowed it to call itself after the eloquent Colonel Barré, who had in Parliament so warmly defended the Americans. Hutchinson Street in Boston, leading down to the wharf which had witnessed the smashing of the tea-chests, was rechristened as Pearl Street. Even the school in Bennet Street lost the name of its founder, and is known to-day as the Eliot school.


No sooner had Hutchinson arrived at his hotel in London, than Lord Dartmouth came for him and hurried him off to an interview with the king, without waiting for him to change his clothes. The conversation, as preserved in the diary, is interesting to read. Neither king, minister, nor governor had the faintest glimmer of prevision as to the course which events were about to take. Hutchinson was right, however,

in feeling uneasy about the vindictive acts of April, and expressed, in guarded but emphatic terms, his disapproval of them and his wish that they might be repealed; but the king and Dartmouth felt sure that Gage would soon mend matters so that there would be no need for further harshness, and it was intended that Hutchinson should presently return to Boston and resume the office of governor. The king did not regard him as superseded by Gage, and it is accordingly right to call Thomas Hutchinson the last royal governor of Massachusetts. A few weeks later the king offered him a baronetcy, which he refused. He cared little for such honours or emoluments as England could give him. His heart was in Massachusetts. Better a farmhouse there, he said, than the finest palace in the Old World. Life in London was, nevertheless, made pleasant for him by the society of the most cultivated and interesting people, and he was everywhere treated with the highest consideration. He now devoted his working hours to the third volume of his history, covering the period from 1750 to 1774. This was, from the nature of the case, largely a narrative of personal experience, and in view of what that experience had been, its fairness and good temper are simply astonishing. The volume remained in manuscript until 1828, when it was published in London by one of the author's grandsons. His diary and letters covering the period of his life in London have been published in two volumes by a great-grandson, since 1884, and amply confirm the most favourable view that can be taken of his character and motives. These documents give a most entertaining view of the state of opinion in London, as the fragmentary tidings of the war found

their way across the ocean, and they throw much light upon the history of the whole situation. The writer's intense love for New England is mournfully conspicuous from first to last. Until Burgoyne's surrender he cherished the hope of returning thither, but after that event he resigned himself to the probability that he must die in exile. The deaths of two of his five children took from his fast-diminishing strength. On the 3d of June, 1780, as he was getting into his carriage at Brompton, there came a stroke of apoplexy, and he fell back into the arms of his servant. His funeral procession passed by the smouldering wrecks of houses just burned in those hideous Gordon riots that Dickens has immortalized in "Barnaby Rudge."

For intellectual gifts and accomplishments, Hutchinson stands far above all the other colonial governors and in the foremost rank among American public men of whatever age. For thorough grasp of finance, he was the peer of Hamilton and Gallatin. In 1809 John Adams, who loved him not, said "he understood the subject of coin and commerce better than any man I ever knew in this country." His mastery of law was equally remarkable, and as a historian his accuracy is of the highest order. His personal magnetism was so great that in spite of all vicissitudes of popular feeling, so long as he remained upon the scene, and until after his departure for England had been followed by the outbreak of war, he did not fully lose his hold upon the people. He was nothing if not public-spirited, and his kindness toward persons in distress and sorrow knew no bounds. Yet in intellectual sympathy with plain common people he seems to have been deficient. He was too thoroughly an aristocrat to enter into their

ways of thinking; and herein was one source of his weakness as a statesman. But the chief source of that weakness, as is so often the case, was closely related to one of his most remarkable features of strength. That inborn legal quality of his mind which, without the customary technical training, made him a jurist capable of winning the admiration of Lord Mansfield, was too strongly developed. Allied with his rigid Puritan conscience, it outweighed other good qualities and warped his nature. He was enveloped in a crust of intense legality, through which he could not break. If he had lived a century later, he might have written the memorable pamphlet in which another great Massachusetts jurist, Benjamin Curtis, argued that President Lincoln had no constitutional authority for emancipating the slaves. It is always well that such strides in advance should be made under careful protest, for only thus is society kept secure against crude experiments. But the men best fitted to utter the protest are not likely to be competent leaders in revolutionary times, when it becomes necessary to view many facts in a new light. For this is required the rare tact of a Samuel Adams or a Lincoln. It was Hutchinson's misfortune that, with such a rigidly legal temperament, he should have been called to fill a supreme executive office at the moment of a great revolutionary crisis. Nothing but failure and obloquy could come from such a situation. Yet the pages of history are strewn with examples of brave men slain in defence of unworthy causes, and because they have been true to their convictions we honour and respect them. Never did Hutchinson flinch a hair's-breadth for the sake of personal advancement. Would that there were more



of this disinterested courage among our public men to-day! When we listen to the cowardly talk of candidates who use language to conceal thought, and dare not speak out like men for fear of losing votes, it occurs to us sometimes that in the life of nations there is no danger so great as the loss of true manliness; and we cannot but feel that from the stormy career of this old Tory governor—maligned, misunderstood, and exiled, but never once robbed of self-respect—there is still a lesson to be learned.



**II**

**CHARLES LEE**

**THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**





## II

### CHARLES LEE

#### THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

WHENEVER a great war is going on, it is apt to draw from other countries a crowd of officers who come to look on and give advice, or perhaps to study the art of war under new conditions, or to carve out for themselves a career for which no chance seems to be offered them at home. This was amply illustrated in the American War of Independence. The war was watched with interest in Europe, not from any special regard for the Americans, — about whom people in general knew rather less than they knew about the inhabitants of Dahomey or of Kamtchatka, — but from a belief that the result would seriously affect the position of Great Britain as a European power. A swarm of officers crossed the Atlantic in the hope of obtaining commands, and not less than twenty-seven such foreigners served in the Continental army, with the rank of general, either major or brigadier. I do not refer to such French allies as came with Rochambeau, or in company with the fleets of D'Estaing and De Grasse. I refer only to such men as obtained commissions from Congress and were classed for the time as American officers. For the most part these men came in the earlier stages of the war, before the French alliance had borne fruit. Some were drawn hither by a noble, disinterested enthusiasm for the cause of political lib-

erty; some were mere selfish schemers, or crack-brained vagrants in quest of adventure. Among the latter one of the most conspicuous was Thomas Conway. Among the former there were five who attained real eminence, and have left a shining mark upon the pages of history. These were De Kalb and Pulaski, who gave up their lives on the battle-field; Lafayette and Kosciuszko, who afterwards returned to their own countries to play honourable but unsuccessful parts; and, last not least, the noble Steuben, who died an American citizen in the second term of Washington's presidency.

But in the eyes of the generation which witnessed the beginning of the Revolutionary War, none of the European officers just mentioned was anything like so conspicuous or so interesting a figure as the man to whose career I invite your attention this evening; Charles Lee was on the ground here before any of these others; he had already been in America; he came with the greatest possible amount of noise; he laid claim to the character of a disinterested enthusiast so vehemently that people believed him. For a while he seemed completely identified with the American cause; and as his name happens to be the same as that of an illustrious Virginian family, posterity seems to have been in some danger of forgetting that he was not himself an American. I don't know how many times I have been asked to state his relationship to the Lees of Virginia; and, what is worse, I found in print some time ago, in a history of the town of Greenwich, R.I., the statement that the traitor of Monmouth was father of the great general, Robert Edward Lee, who might thus be supposed to have inherited what the

writer is pleased to consider his natural propensity toward treason!<sup>1</sup> Such absurdities show that even the industrious writers of town histories do not always consult biographical dictionaries and other easily accessible sources of information, but it is a pity that they should find their way into print. Whether the Cheshire family to which Charles Lee belonged was in any remote way connected with the Lees of Virginia is uncertain. Of Charles Lee's immediate ancestry little is known except that he was the youngest son of John Lee, of Dernhall in Cheshire, and Isabella, daughter of Sir Henry Bunbury, of Stanney in the same county. John Lee was for some time captain of dragoons, and at length, after 1742, colonel of the 44th regiment of infantry. Charles Lee was born at Dernhall in 1731, and is said to have received a commission in the army at the age of eleven. This seems at first a ridiculous story; but that was an age of abuses, and a study of the British army list in the good old days of the two first Georges brings to light some astonishing facts. Ensigns and cornets were duly enrolled, and drew their quarterly stipends, before leaving the nursery; and the Duchess of Marlborough, in one of her letters, has something still better to tell. Colonel Lepel made his own daughter a cornet in his regiment as soon as she was born; and why not? asks the duchess; at that time of life a girl was quite as useful to the army as a boy. This girl was afterward Lady Hervey, and she went on drawing her salary as

<sup>1</sup>“Charles Lee died a miserable, neglected, and disappointed man. It would seem that treason is hereditary, as his son, the late General Lee, commander-in-chief of the Southern Rebellion (sic), followed in the footsteps of his father.”—D. H. Greene's “History of East Greenwich, R.I.,” p. 259.

cornet for some years after she had become maid of honour to the queen. By and by it occurred to Lord Sunderland that this was a little too absurd; and so he induced her to resign her commission in exchange for a pension from George I.<sup>1</sup> This memorable incident seems to have escaped the notice of our modern framers of pension bills.

As the date at which Charles Lee reached the age of eleven was precisely that at which his father reached the rank of colonel, it is not improbable that he may have received a commission of the sort just described. However this may have been, he is known to have studied at the free grammar-school of Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, and afterward at an academy in Switzerland. He acquired some familiarity with Greek and Latin, and a thorough practical knowledge of French. In later years, in the course of his rambles about Europe, he became more or less proficient in Spanish, Italian, and German. From an early age he seems to have applied himself diligently to the study of the military art. In May, 1751, shortly after his father's death, he received a lieutenant's commission in that 44th regiment, of which his father had been colonel. The regiment was ordered to America in 1754, and under its lieutenant-colonel, Thomas Gage, formed the advance of Braddock's army, and received the first attack of the French and Indians in the terrible battle of the Monongahela. It was in this disastrous campaign that Lee must have become acquainted with Horatio Gates and perhaps with George Washington. The remains of the shattered army were in the autumn taken northward to

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Moore, "Treason of Charles Lee," p. 5.

Albany and Schenectady, where they went into winter quarters. Lee was present at several conferences between Sir William Johnson and the chiefs of the Six Nations, and became much interested in the Indians. His relations with them soon became so friendly that he was adopted into the Mohawk tribe of the Bear, and thus acquired the privilege of smoking a pipe with them as they sat around the council fire. He also formed a temporary matrimonial alliance with one of the foremost families of the Six Nations, and wrote about it to his sister in England, with quaint frankness. "My wife," said he, "is daughter to the famous White Thunder who is Belt of Wampum to the Senakas — which is in fact their Lord Treasurer. She is a very great beauty, and is more like your friend Mrs. Griffith than anybody I know. I shall say nothing of her accomplishments, for you must be certain that a woman of her fashion cannot be without many." The Indians, he continues, are even more polite than the French, "if you will allow good breeding to consist in a constant desire to do everything that will please you, and a strict carefulness not to say or do anything that may offend you." Of this well-bred desire to please, the same letter gives an instance.<sup>1</sup> A young Mohawk, anxious to show his gratitude for some trifling service Lee had rendered him, prowled about the neighbouring woods until he succeeded in killing a French sergeant on picket duty; then he carefully decorated the scalp with bright blue ribbons and presented it to Lee in token of brotherly love. Lee's definition of good breeding is excellent; but his practice did not comport with his theory. He was

<sup>1</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, Lee Papers, I. 5.

already noted among his fellow-soldiers for an arrogant and quarrelsome temper, and the significant name bestowed upon him by his Mohawk friends was "Boiling Water." He seemed to court opportunities for saying and doing offensive things. His tongue bit shrewdly; it was a nipping and an eager tongue. He was fond of commenting upon the imbecility of his superior officers, and the conduct of the war afforded plenty of occasions for this display of humour. About this time — in accordance with a practice which survived in the British army until Mr. Gladstone put an end to it — he purchased, for £900, a captain's commission in the 44th. The commission was dated June 11, 1756. The regiment did little that year except take part in a futile attempt to raise the siege of Oswego, which surrendered to the French on the 14th of August. After another idle winter in the neighbourhood of Albany, the troops were conveyed by sea to Halifax, from which point the Earl of Loudon intended to pounce upon the great stronghold of Louisburg. A powerful force was collected, and some acres were prudently planted with succulent vegetables as a safeguard against scurvy; but nothing more was accomplished, for the commander-in-chief, according to Franklin, resembled King George on the tavern sign-boards, always on horseback but never getting ahead. When Captain Lee openly derided the campaign as a "cabbage-planting enterprise," the remark drew public attention to the young man, and no doubt there were quarters where it sank deep and was remembered against him.

Early in the next summer, 1758, we find the 44th regiment marching up the valley of the Hudson, as

part of the fine army with which General Abercrombie was expected to take Ticonderoga. At the Flats near Albany, Lee's company encamped on the farm of Mrs. Schuyler, aunt of the distinguished general of that name, a noble and benevolent woman, of whom Mrs. Grant of Laggan has left such a charming description, in her "Memoirs of an American Lady." Mrs. Schuyler's generosity toward soldiers was well known; but Lee, who had forgotten to provide himself with the proper certificates for obtaining supplies, and was seizing horses and oxen, blankets and eatables, to right and left, with as little ceremony as if in an enemy's country, did not spare this lady's well-stocked farm; and when she ventured a few mild words of expostulation, he replied with such a torrent of foul epithet that she had much ado to restrain her servants from assaulting him. A few days later came the murderous battle before Ticonderoga, where British and Americans were so terribly defeated by Montcalm. There Thomas Gage fought side by side with Israel Putnam and John Stark, little dreaming of another bright summer day near Boston, seventeen years to come; there was slain Lord Howe, eldest of the three famous brothers; and there in a gallant charge our cynical young captain was shot through the body and carried off from the field. Bruised and battered, and with two ribs broken, he doubtless had breath enough left to growl and snarl over the incompetency of the general whom, in the next letter to his sister, he calls "beastly poltroon" and "booby-in-chief." On hearing the news, Mrs. Schuyler had her largest barn prepared for a hospital. Thither, with many others, Captain Lee was taken and treated so



kindly that his rough heart was softened. He averred, with terrific oaths, that "a place would surely be reserved for Madame in heaven, though no other woman should be there, and that he should wish for nothing better than to share her final destiny."<sup>1</sup>

By December the wound had healed, and we find him in winter quarters on Long Island, thrashing the surgeon of his regiment for a scandalous lampoon. And here we are introduced to the first of a series of little "special providences" keeping this personage alive for the singular part which he was to play in American history. The cowardly doctor nursed his wrath, lurked among the bushes by a lonely roadside, seized the captain's bridle, and fired at his heart; but the horse opportunely shied and the bullet tore Lee's clothing and skin just under the left arm. The surgeon was cocking a second pistol when another officer came up and struck it from his hand. Then the surgeon was collared and dragged off to camp, where a court-martial presently turned him adrift upon the world.

The next summer Lee was present at the capture of Fort Niagara, and was sent with a small party to follow the route of the few French who escaped. This was the first party of English troops that ever crossed Lake Erie. Their march led them to Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburg), which General Forbes had captured the year before. Thence a march of seven hundred miles brought them to Crown Point to meet General Amherst. There was yet another long march to Oswego and back before Lee settled down for the winter in Philadelphia, and was employed in beating

<sup>1</sup> Lossing's "Schuyler," I. 154.

up recruits. In the final campaign of 1760 his regiment was part of the force led by Amherst from Lake Ontario down the St. Lawrence to Montreal; and after the capture of that town had completed the conquest of Canada, he returned to England. His uncle, Sir William Bunbury, writing from London, had alluded to chances of promotion, and incidentally observed that many fashionable matches were reported, and he had better come home before all the fine young ladies were disposed of. Perhaps Sir William had not heard of the accomplished daughter of the "Lord Treasurer" White Thunder. The promotion came in August, 1761, when Lee was appointed Major in the 103d regiment, known as the Volunteer Hunters. War was then breaking out between Spain and Portugal, and in 1762 a small British army was sent to aid the Portuguese. The chief command of the allied forces was given to one of the ablest generals of his time, the famous Count von Lippe-Schaumburg, a grandson of King George I., and own cousin to the brothers Howe. Lee accompanied the expedition with a brevet of lieutenant-colonel from the king of Portugal, and his brigadier-commander was General Burgoyne. The campaign was a brilliant success, and Lee received honourable mention for the masterly way in which he surprised and carried by storm the Spanish position at Villa Velha on the Tagus. On his return to England he busied himself with schemes of colonization in America, in which he aspired to emulate the fame of Penn and Oglethorpe. A colony was to be founded on the Ohio River below the Wabash, and another on the Illinois. Inducements were to be held out for Protestant emigrants from Switzerland

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and Germany, as well as from England; but the enterprise found few supporters. About this time, in 1763, the 103d regiment was disbanded, and Lee passed virtually into retirement as a major on half-pay. At this he was disappointed and enraged, for a good word from the Count von Lippe-Schaumburg had given him some reason to expect promotion. But the ministry disliked him, partly on account of his liberal opinions and the vehemence with which he declared them, partly because of the fierceness with which he vilified and lampooned anybody of whom he disapproved. Though his later career showed that he had not the courage of his convictions, yet there can be no doubt that he really entertained very decided opinions. He was a radical free-thinker of the unripe, acrid sort, like his contemporaries, John Wilkes and Thomas Paine. He wrote and talked quite sensibly about many things; his sympathetic appreciation of Beccaria's great treatise on "Crime and Punishment" was much to his credit; as a schoolboy in Switzerland he had learned republican theories under good teachers; and there is no reason for doubting his sincerity in hating and despising the despotism which then prevailed almost everywhere on the continent of Europe. Sometimes he dealt humorously with such topics; as in his epistle to David Hume. In reading books on history, he said, nothing had so frequently shocked him as the disrespectful and irreverent manner in which divers writers have spoken of crowned heads. "Many princes, it must be owned, have acted in some instances not altogether as we could wish," but it is the duty of the historian to draw a veil over their weakness. He was glad to see that Mr. Hume had

acted upon this sound precept in depicting the exalted virtues of the Stuarts. He had heard that this history of England was the only one his sacred Majesty George III. could be induced to read, and he didn't wonder at it. He had often thought of writing history himself, and now that he had got his cue from Mr. Hume, he should go on and devote his energies to the much-needed task of rescuing from unmerited odium those grossly slandered saints, the emperor Claudius and his successor Nero.

But it was seldom that Lee's sarcasm was so gentle as this. Usually he lost his temper and hurled about such epithets as scoundrels, idiots, numskulls, diabolical tyrants, damned conspirators, sceptred robbers, impious cutthroats. Was it a public man of whom he disapproved, he would say "everything he touches becomes putrid;" was it some opinion from which he dissented, he would say "it was the most cunning fiend in hell who first broached this doctrine."<sup>1</sup> Speech less peppery than this seemed tasteless to Charles Lee. The accumulation of oaths and superlatives often makes the reading of his letters and pamphlets rather dreary work. When they were first published, or quoted in conversation, they served to offend powerful people and ruin the writer's hopes of advancement. Had he been a man of real ability, or had he been favoured by some queer freak of fortune that would have made him, like Wilkes, a bone of contention, he might have risen to eminence in the opposition party. But his talents were too slender for this; something more than growling and swearing was needed. Accordingly he soon made up his mind

<sup>1</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, Lee Papers, I. 74.

that he was not properly appreciated in England, and early in 1765 he made his way to that home of turbulent spirits, Poland, where he received an appointment on the staff of the new king, Stanislaus Augustus. Next year, in accompanying the Polish embassy to Turkey, he narrowly escaped freezing to death on the Balkan Mountains, and again, while in Constantinople, came near being buried in the ruins of his house, which was destroyed by an earthquake. In 1766 he returned to England and spent two years in a fruitless attempt to obtain promotion. Having at length quite established his reputation as a disappointed and vindictive place-hunter, he tried Poland again. In 1769 he was commissioned major-general in the Polish army, but did not relinquish his half-pay as a British major, because it was "too considerable a sum to throw away wantonly."<sup>1</sup> Early in the winter he served in a campaign against the Turks, and was present in a battle at Chotzim on the Moldavian frontier. Here, as usual, he declared that the commanders under whom he served were fools.<sup>2</sup> His brief service was ended by a fever from which he barely escaped with his life. The rest of the winter was spent in Vienna, and in the spring of 1770 he proceeded to Italy, where he lost two fingers in an affair of honour in which an Italian officer crossed swords with him. His earliest biographer, Edward Langworthy, observes that "his warmth of temper drew him into many rencounters of this kind; in all which he acquitted himself with singular courage, sprightliness of imagination, and great presence of mind."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moore, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Lee Papers, I. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Langworthy, "Memoirs of Charles Lee," London, 1792, p. 8.

What in the world sprightliness of imagination in duelling may be, we are left to conjecture. Perhaps in this case it may have been exemplified in the immediate recourse to pistols, the result of which was that the Italian was slain, and Lee was obliged to flee to Gibraltar, where he embarked for London. In May, 1772, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel on half-pay, but was unable to obtain any further recognition from government.

Ever since the Stamp Act our knight-errant had kept an eye upon the troubles in America, and his letters show that by soldiers and princes at least, even as far as Poland, the quarrel between Great Britain and her colonies was watched with interest. It now seems to have occurred to him that America might afford a promising career for a soldier of fortune. He arrived in New York on the 10th of November, 1773, in the midst of the agitation over the tea ships, and the next ten months were spent in a journey through the colonies as far as Virginia in one direction and Massachusetts in the other. In the course of this journey he made the acquaintance of nearly all the leaders of the Revolutionary party, and won high favour from the zeal with which he espoused their cause. He visited Mount Vernon and was warmly greeted by Washington. Whether Washington remembered him or not, as a lieutenant in 1755, is not at all clear. But now the great European soldier, who had fought on the banks of the Tagus and of the Dniester, and was a member of the liberal party in England withal, was sure to interest the noble, genial, and modest man who commanded the militia of Virginia. Whether he could have found favour with Mrs. Washington is

much more doubtful. With ladies Lee was never a favourite. Mercy Warren, the sister of James Otis, and one of the brightest and most highly cultivated women of her time, saw Lee under all the glamour of his newly assumed greatness, yet, while she admitted that he was "judicious" and "learned" (these were her words), she could not but remark upon his extreme coarseness and his slovenly habits. Indeed, when we observe the frightful latitude of speech in some of his letters, we feel that he would have been an uncomfortable guest to invite to dinner. He was tall and extremely slender, almost without shoulders, the forehead rather high but very narrow, the nose aquiline and enormous, the complexion sallow, the eyes small and deep-set, inquisitive and restless, the upper lip curled in chronic disdain of everything and everybody, the chin contracted and feeble; such was Charles Lee at the age of two and forty, when he revisited America, a weak, dyspeptic, querulous man. His linen, like Daniel Quilp's, was of a peculiar hue, for such was his taste and fancy; his clothes had the air of having been only half put on; and he was seldom seen in private or in public without five or six dogs at his heels. Once he is said to have invited a friend to dinner, and when the meal was served the only other guests were found to be half a score of dogs, both great and small, which squatted on chairs and lapped up their food from plates set before them on the table. "I must have some object to embrace," said he; "when I can be convinced that men are as worthy objects as dogs, I shall transfer my benevolence, and become as stanch a philanthropist as the canting Addison affected to be."

All these uncouth looks and ways were at first interpreted by the people as eccentricities of genius. To some persons, doubtless, they seemed to add a touch of romantic interest to a man whom every one looked upon as a public benefactor. There is no doubt that at this time he did render some real services with tongue and pen, while his self-seeking motives were hidden by the earnestness of his arguments in behalf of political liberty and the unquestionable sincerity of his invectives against the British government. The best of his writings at this time was the "Strictures on a Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans, in Reply to Dr. Myles Cooper," in which the arguments of the Tory president of King's College were severely handled. This pamphlet, published in 1774, was many times reprinted, and exerted considerable influence. While the first Continental Congress was in session at Philadelphia, Lee was present in that city and was ready with his advice and opinions. He set himself up for an expert in military matters, and there was not a campaign in ancient or modern history which he could not expound and criticise with the air of a man who had exhausted the subject. The American leaders, ill acquainted with military science, and flattered by the prospect of securing the aid of a great European soldier, were naturally ready to take him at his own valuation; but he felt that one grave obstacle stood in the way of his appointment to the chief command. In a letter to Edmund Burke, dated the 16th of December, 1774, he observed that he did not think the Americans "would or ought to confide in a man, let his qualifications be ever so great, who has no property among them." To remove this objection he purchased, for



about £5000 in Virginia currency (equal to about £3000 sterling), an estate in Berkeley County, in the Shenandoah valley, near that of his friend Horatio Gates. He did not complete this purchase till the last of May, 1775, while the second Continental Congress was in session. A letter to Gates at this time seems to indicate that he was awaiting the action of the Congress, and did not finally commit himself to the purchase until virtually sure of a high military command. To pay for the estate he borrowed £3000 of Robert Morris, to whom he mortgaged the property as security, while he drew bills on his attorney in England for the amount. On the 17th of June he received as high a command as Congress thought it prudent to give him, that of second major-general in the Continental army. The reasons for making Washington commander-in-chief were generally convincing. It was as yet only the four New England states that had actually taken up arms, and in order to swell the rebellion to continental dimensions it was indispensable that Virginia should commit herself irrevocably in the struggle. For this reason John Adams was foremost in urging the appointment of Washington as commander-in-chief. But as the only Continental army at that moment existing was the force of sixteen thousand New England men with which General Artemas Ward was besieging Boston, it was not deemed polite to place a second in command over Ward. Some of Lee's friends, and in particular Thomas Mifflin, afterward active in the Conway cabal, urged that he should at least have the first place after Washington; but John Adams declared that, while the New England army would cheerfully serve under Washington, it could not

be expected to acquiesce in having another than its own general in the next place. Accordingly Ward was appointed first of the major-generals and Lee second. The British adventurer, who had cherished hopes of receiving the chief command, was keenly disappointed. For the present he repressed his spleen against Washington, but made no secret of his contempt for Ward, whom he described as "a fat old gentleman who had been a popular churchwarden, but had no acquaintance whatever with military affairs." When Lee was informed of his appointment, he begged leave, before accepting it, to confer with a committee of Congress with regard to his private affairs. The committee being immediately appointed, he made it a condition of his entering the American service that he should be indemnified by Congress for any pecuniary loss he might suffer by so doing, and that this reimbursement should be made as soon as the amount of such loss should be ascertained. Congress at once assented to this condition, and Lee accepted his appointment. Up to this moment he had retained his commission as lieutenant-colonel in the British army. Three days after obtaining definite promise from Congress, he wrote to Lord Barrington, the secretary of war, in the following characteristic vein:—

"My Lord: Although I can by no means subscribe to the opinion of divers people in the world, that an officer on half-pay is to be considered in the service, yet I think it a point of delicacy to pay a deference to this opinion, erroneous and absurd as it is. I therefore apprise your lordship, in the most public and solemn manner, that I do renounce my half-pay from the date hereof. At the same time I beg leave to

assure your lordship that whenever it may please his Majesty to call me forth to any honourable service against the natural hereditary enemies of our country, or in defence of his just rights and dignity, no man will obey the righteous summons with more zeal and alacrity than myself; but the present measures seem to me so absolutely subversive of the rights and liberties of every individual subject, so destructive to the whole empire at large, and ultimately so ruinous to his Majesty's own person, dignity, and family, that I think myself obliged in conscience, as a citizen, Englishman, and soldier of a free state, to exert my utmost to defeat them. I most devoutly pray to Almighty God to direct his Majesty into measures more consonant to his interest and honour, and more conducive to the happiness and glory of his people."<sup>1</sup>

That Lee should have felt called upon to refuse further pay from the crown at the moment of accepting a commission from a revolutionary body engaged in maintaining armed resistance to the crown and its officers, one would think but natural. That in so doing he should have declared himself to be acting in deference to an absurd and overstrained notion of delicacy, shows how far from overstrained his own sense of delicacy was. His letter<sup>2</sup> is an unconscious confession that he ought long ago to have resigned his half-pay. Now he was simply making a merit of necessity; for there could be little doubt that, as soon as the news of his American commission should reach the ears of the ministry, his half-pay would be cut off,

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, I. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Found in February, 1858, in Sutton Court, Somerset, home of Sir Edward Strachey, where he kept many documents.

and his other sources of income, amounting in all to about £1000 yearly, confiscated. It was right that he should be indemnified for the loss, and Congress did not for a moment call in question the reasonableness of his request. Nevertheless, when we remember how Lee was afterward fond of prating about his rare disinterestedness and the sacrifices he had made in the cause of American freedom, when we consider especially how he liked to bring himself into comparison with Washington, to the disadvantage of the latter, we cannot help feeling the strong contrast between all this careful bargaining and the conduct of the high-minded man who, at that same moment, in accepting the chief command of the Revolutionary army, refused to take a penny for his services.

To this matter of Lee's indemnification our attention will again be directed. Meanwhile, having thus entered the American service, the soldier of fortune accompanied Washington in his journey to Cambridge, and at every town through which they passed he seemed to be quite as much an object of curiosity and admiration as the commander-in-chief. According to Lee's own theory of the relationship between the two, his was the controlling mind. He was the trained and scientific European soldier to whose care had been in a measure intrusted this raw American general, who for political reasons had been placed in command over him. In point of fact, Lee's military experience, as we have here passed it in review, had been scarcely more extensive than Washington's; and of actual responsibility he had wielded much less. Such little reputation as he had in Europe was not that of a soldier, but of a caustic pamphleteer. Yet if

he had been the hero of a dozen great battles, if he had rescued Portugal from the Spaniard and Poland from the Turk, he could not have claimed or obtained more deference in this country than he did. And no one treated him with higher consideration, or showed more respect for his opinions, than the grand and modest hero, all unconscious of his own Titanic powers, who rode beside him.

On arriving at Cambridge, Lee was placed in command of the left wing of the army, with his headquarters at Winter Hill, in what is now Somerville. The only incident that marked his stay at Cambridge was a correspondence with his old friend Burgoyne, then lately arrived in Boston, which led to a scheme for a conference between Lee and Burgoyne, with a view to the restoration of an amicable understanding between the colonies and the mother country. The proposal came from Burgoyne, and Lee treated it with frankness and discretion. He laid the matter before the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, and when that body mildly signified its disapproval but left it for Lee to decide, he sent a polite note to Burgoyne declining the interview. This was in July. Four months afterward there came from the Old World a warning that Lee was not a man of trustworthy character. A provisional government had then been formed in Massachusetts with the president of the council for its executive head, and James Otis, in one of the last of his lucid intervals, then occupied that position. On the 14th of November Otis sent a letter to Lee, quite touching for its high-minded simplicity. The council had come into possession of a letter from Ireland, making very unfavourable mention of Lee.

It produced no impression upon the council. On the contrary, says Otis, "we are at a loss to know which is the highest evidence of your virtues—the greatness and number of your friends, or the malice and envy of your foes."<sup>1</sup> Good advice is often taken in this way. A century has passed without giving us any further clew to this letter.

In December it was learned that Sir Henry Clinton was about to start from Boston on an expedition to the southward, and fears were entertained for Rhode Island and New York. Washington accordingly sent Lee to meet the emergency. After stopping at Newport long enough to arrest a few Tory citizens, Lee proceeded in January to New York, where he did good service in beginning the fortifications needed for the city and neighbouring strategic points. On the news of Montgomery's death, he was appointed to command the army in Canada; but scarcely had he been informed of this appointment when his destination was changed. On the 19th of February, John Adams wrote him, "We want you at New York, we want you at Cambridge, we want you in Virginia, but Canada seems of more importance than any of these places, and therefore you are sent there. I wish you as many laurels as Wolfe and Montgomery reaped there, with a happier fate." From such expressions one may infer that, while Adams had for political reasons urged the appointment of Washington to the chief command of the army, he still placed his main reliance upon the presumed military talents of Lee. At any rate there can be little doubt that the adventurer himself so interpreted them. On the same day a letter

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, I. 218.

from Franklin said, "I rejoice that you are going to Canada"; and another from Benjamin Rush observed, "I tremble only at the price of victory . . . ; should your blood mingle with the blood of Wolfe, Montcalm, and Montgomery, posterity will execrate the Plains of Abraham to the end of time." But on the 3d of March Lee wrote to Washington: "My destination is altered. Instead of going to Canada, I am appointed to command to the southward. . . . As I am the only general officer on the continent who can speak and think in French, I confess it would have been more prudent to have sent me to Canada, but I shall obey with alacrity." The reason for this change was the discovery that Clinton's expedition was aimed at some point in the Southern states. Its effect upon Lee's fortunes was much more favourable than he supposed. In Canada, even if he had possessed all the genius for which people gave him credit, he could never have held his ground against Carleton's fine army, outnumbering him four to one; at the South, on the other hand, circumstances played into his hands and enabled him very cheaply to increase his reputation. He went first to Virginia, where he stayed till the middle of May, with headquarters at Williamsburg. The burning political question that spring was whether the colonies should unite in a declaration of independence, and on this point Lee expressed himself with his customary emphasis. To Edward Rutledge he wrote, "By the eternal God! if you don't declare yourselves independent, you deserve to be slaves." At the hesitating action of the Maryland convention in March he lost all patience. "What!" he cried, "when an execrable

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, I. 312-314; 343.

tyrant, an abandoned parliament, and a corrupt, pusillanimous people have formed a hellish league to rob you of everything men hold most dear; is it possible there should be creatures who march on two legs and call themselves human, who can be so destitute of sentiment, courage, and feeling, as sobbingly to protest they shall consider separation from these butchers and robbers as the last of misfortunes? Oh, I could brain you with your ladies' fans!"<sup>1</sup> We shall do well to remember this fervid vehemence when we come to the very different key in which the writer's sentiments are pitched just twelve months later.

While these things were going on, Clinton was cruising about Albemarle Sound, but late in May Sir Peter Parker's fleet arrived, with fresh troops under Lord Cornwallis, and presently on the 4th of June the whole armada was collected before the entrance to Charleston harbour. Lee, following by land, reached the city on the same day. Preparations had already been made to resist the enemy, and Colonel William Moultrie was constructing his famous palmetto fort on Sullivan's Island. Lee blustered and found fault, as usual, sneered at the palmetto stronghold, and would have ordered Moultrie to abandon it; but President Rutledge persuaded him to let the sagacious colonel have his way. In the battle which ensued, on the 28th of June, between the fort and the fleet, Moultrie won a decisive and very brilliant victory. But as Moultrie was as yet unknown outside of South Carolina, the credit was by most people inconsiderately given to Lee. In his despatch to Congress the latter spoke generously of the courage and skill of his

<sup>1</sup> Langworthy's "Memoirs," p. 382.



subordinate officer. Perhaps it was hardly to be expected of him that he should frankly confess that the victory was won through neglect of his own scientific advice. On the departure of the discomfited British fleet, the "hero of Charleston," as he was now called, prepared to invade Florida; but early in September he was ordered to report to Congress at Philadelphia. The question of his indemnification had been laid before Congress in a letter from Mr. Rutledge, dated the 4th of July, and action was now taken upon it. The bills for £3000 drawn upon his agent in England to repay the sum advanced by Robert Morris for the purchase of the Virginia estate had been protested for lack of funds, as Lee's property in England had been sequestered. Congress accordingly voted, on the 7th of October, to advance \$30,000 to General Lee by way of indemnification. Should his English estate ever be recovered, he was to repay this sum.

This point having been made, he went on to New York, where he arrived on the 14th of October, and took command of the right wing of Washington's army upon Harlem Heights. By the resignation of General Ward in the spring, Lee had become senior major-general, and in the event of disaster to Washington he might hope at length to realize his wishes and become commander-in-chief. The calamitous fall of Fort Mifflin, on the 26th of October, seemed to afford the desired opportunity. At that moment Washington, whose defensive campaign had from the outset been marked in every particular by most consummate skill, had placed half of his army on the New Jersey side of the river, in order to check any movement of the British toward Philadelphia. He had left

Lee at Northcastle, with the other half of the army, about seven thousand men, with instructions to await his orders and move promptly upon receiving them. As soon as it had become evident that Howe was about to throw a superior force against Washington, the latter sent an order to Lee to cross the Hudson River without a moment's delay, and effect a junction of the two parts of the army. But Lee pretended to regard the order in the light of mere advice, raised objections, fumed and quibbled, and did not stir. While Washington was now obliged to fall back through New Jersey, in order to avoid fighting against overwhelming odds, his daily messages to Lee grew more and more peremptory, but no heed was paid to them. Many people were throwing the blame for the loss of Fort Washington upon the commander-in-chief, and were contrasting him unfavourably with the "hero of Charleston"; and Lee, instead of obeying orders, busied himself in writing letters calculated to spread and increase this disaffection toward Washington. Among his correspondents were some of the men who in the course of the next year became implicated with the Conway cabal, such as Gates and Dr. Benjamin Rush. In letters to prominent New England men, he tried to play upon the most contemptible of all the mean feelings that disgrace human nature,—the feeling of sectional dislike and distrust which many in that part of the country entertained toward the great Virginian. At the same time he tried to assume command over General Heath, whom Washington had left in charge of the Highlands with very explicit instructions. Lee wished to detach part of Heath's force, and announced that since a broad river intervened

between himself and Washington, he now considered himself invested with an independent command. But for courage and fidelity Heath was a true bulldog. Lee's letters to him grew more and more angry. "I suppose you think," said Lee, "that if General Washington should remove to the Straits of Magellan, nevertheless the instructions he left with you are to be followed in spite of what your superior officers might say; but I will have you to understand that I command on this side of the river, and for the future I must and will be obeyed."<sup>1</sup> Heath, however, was immovable; and a letter from Washington, arriving the next day, declared his own view of the case in such unequivocal language that Lee did not deem it prudent to push his Patagonian theory any farther. So he desisted, with a very ill grace, and on the 2d of December, after a fortnight's delay, he crossed the Hudson, with a force diminished to four thousand men. On that same day Washington in his swift retreat reached Princeton, with his force diminished to three thousand men. The terms of service of many of the soldiers had expired, and the prospect was so dismal, that few were willing to reënlist. It was the gloomiest moment in the Revolutionary War and in Washington's career; and the most alarming feature in the whole situation was this outrageous insubordination on the part of Lee. Washington had ordered him to keep well to the westward, and had even indicated the particular road and ferry by which he wished him to cross the Delaware, near Alexandria, but in flat disregard of these orders Lee marched slowly to Morristown. At this moment Gates was approaching, on his way from

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, II. 313.

Ticonderoga, with seven regiments sent down by Schuyler to Washington's assistance; but Lee interposed, and with more success than he had had in Heath's case, diverted three of these regiments to Morristown. By this time Washington had retreated beyond the Delaware, and almost everybody considered his campaign hopelessly ruined. It seemed as if the cause of American independence was decisively overthrown, and it certainly was not Charles Lee's fault that it was not so. His design in thus moving independently was to operate upon the British flank from Morristown, a position of which Washington himself afterward illustrated the great value. The selfish schemer wished to secure for himself whatever advantage might be gained from such a movement. His plan was to look on and see Washington defeated and humbled, and then strike a blow on his own account. If Cornwallis had prevailed upon Howe to let him collect a flotilla of boats and push on across the river in pursuit of Washington, there would have been a chance offered to Lee to strike the enemy's rear before the crossing had been fully effected. But Howe, perhaps mindful of such a contingency, decided to wait a few days in the hope of seeing the river frozen hard enough to bear troops. In the meantime Lee's castle in the air was overthrown by his own foolishness. On the 13th of December, having left his army in charge of Sullivan, he had for some unknown reason passed the night at White's tavern in Baskingridge, about four miles distant. A zealous Tory in the neighbourhood had noted the fact, and galloped off to the nearest British encampment, eighteen miles distant. Lieutenant-colonel Harcourt, with Captain Banastre

Tarleton and a party of thirty-eight horse, immediately started forth in quest of such high game. At day-break young Major Wilkinson arrived at the inn, with a message from Gates, and found Lee in bed. The general jumped up, thrust his feet into slippers, threw on an old flannel gown over his nightclothes, and proceeded to write a letter to Gates, setting forth his own exalted merits and Washington's matchless stupidity. He had hardly signed and folded it when Wilkinson at the window screamed, "The British! the British!" In the twinkling of an eye the house was surrounded and the blustering letter-writer dragged from his bedroom. Several of these soldiers had served with Lee in Portugal and witnessed his gallantry at Villa Velha. They were now surprised and disgusted at seeing him fall on his knees in abject terror, raving like a madman and begging Colonel Harcourt to spare his life. "Had he behaved with proper spirit," says Captain Harris, in his journal, "I should have pitied him." No time was wasted. They picked him up, bare-headed and half-dressed, mounted him on Wilkinson's horse, tied him hand and foot, and led him off, with taunts and mirthful jeers. Of course, they said, he must not be surprised if General Howe were to treat him as a deserter, because he was one. The miserable creature muttered and cursed, and let fall one remark which they did not quite comprehend. "Just as I had got the supreme command," said he,<sup>1</sup> and presently added, "The game is up, it is all up." So they carried him off to New Brunswick, while his troops, thus opportunely relieved of such a commander, were promptly marched by Sullivan to Washington's assist-

<sup>1</sup> Moore, p. 63.

ance, in time to take part in the glorious movement upon Trenton and Princeton. Had it not been for Lee's capture, in the very nick of time, it is doubtful if Washington would have had men enough to undertake that movement, which instantly reversed the fortunes of the campaign and opened the way for the decisive triumphs of the next year. But the Americans, who did not possess the clew to Lee's strange conduct, felt that they had lost a treasure.

Of his conduct in captivity, which would soon have afforded such a clew, nothing was known until all the actors in those stirring scenes had been for many a year in their graves. Lee was taken to New York and confined in the City Hall, where he was courteously treated, but he well understood that his life was in danger in case the British government should see fit to regard him as a deserter from the army. Sir William Howe wrote home for instructions, and in reply was directed to send his prisoner to England for trial. Lee had already been sent on board ship, when a letter from Washington put a stop to these proceedings. The letter informed Howe that Washington held five Hessian field-officers as hostages for Lee's personal safety. In thus choosing Hessians as hostages, Washington showed his unfailing sagacity. The king's feeling toward Lee was extremely bitter and revengeful, and no doubt he would have taken pleasure in putting him to an ignominious death; but to disregard the safety of the Hessian officers would arouse a dangerous spirit of disaffection among the German troops. In this quandary the obstinate and vindictive king entered upon a discussion that lasted just a year. Letters went back and forth between Howe and the

ministry on the one hand, and Howe and Washington on the other, until at length, in December, 1777, Howe was instructed to consider Lee a prisoner of war, and subject to exchange as such whenever convenient.

During this interval, while his fate was in suspense, the prisoner was busy in operations on his own account. First he assured the brothers Howe that he was opposed to the Declaration of Independence; that "if the Americans had followed his advice, matters could never have gone to such a length;"<sup>1</sup> and even now he hoped, if he could only obtain an interview with a committee from Congress, to be able to open negotiations for an honourable and satisfactory adjustment of all existing difficulties. The Howes, who were well disposed toward the Americans and sincerely anxious for peace, allowed him to ask for the interview; but Congress refused to grant it. Lee's extraordinary conduct before his capture had somewhat injured his reputation, and there were vague suspicions, though no one knew exactly what to suspect him of. These doubts affected the soundness of his judgment rather than of his character. His behaviour was considered wayward and eccentric, but was not seen to be treacherous. The worst that was now supposed about him was that he had suffered himself to be hoodwinked by the Howes into requesting a conference that could answer no good purpose. If the truth had only been known, how sorely would all good people have been astonished! No sooner was the conference refused than the wretch went over to the enemy, and sought to curry favour with the Howes by

<sup>1</sup> Moore, p. 83.

giving them aid and counsel for the next campaign against the Americans. He went so far as to write out for them a detailed plan of operations. After the disastrous result of the campaign of 1777 the brothers did not wish to disclose the secret of their peculiar obligations to such an adviser. Lee's document remained in possession of their private secretary, Sir Henry Strachey, who carried it home to England next year, and carefully stowed it away with other papers in the library at Sutton Court, his fine, hospitable old country house in Somersetshire. There, after a slumber of eighty years, it was found and perused by intelligent eyes,<sup>1</sup> and it has since found its way into the Lenox Library in New York. The paper is in Lee's handwriting, folded, and indorsed as "Mr. Lee's Plan—29th March 1777." The indorsement is in the handwriting of Sir Henry Strachey. In this paper Lee expressly abandons the American cause, enters "sincerely and zealously" (those are his words) into the plans of the British commanders, and recommends an expedition to Chesapeake Bay essentially similar to that which was undertaken in the following summer. This elaborate paper throws some light upon the movements of General Howe, in July and August, 1777, which were formerly regarded as so strange. Instead of moving straight up the Hudson River, to coöperate with Burgoyne in accordance with the carefully studied plan of the ministry, General Howe wasted the summer in a series of movements which landed him at the end of August fifty miles south of Philadelphia, with Washington's army in front of him, while the gallant Burgoyne, three hundred miles away,

<sup>1</sup> *Magazine of American History*, III. 450.



was marching to his doom. This supreme blunder on the part of Howe was ruinous to the British cause. It led directly to the surrender of Burgoyne, and thus to the French alliance and indirectly to Yorktown. The blunder was no doubt largely due to Lee's wild advice, but we owe him small thanks for it. It is impossible to read his paper and not see that in his stupendous conceit he regarded himself as the palladium of the American cause. His capture he regarded as the final overthrow of that cause. What was left of it could be of no use to anybody, and he had better secure good terms for himself by helping to stamp it out as quickly as possible.

If anything had been known about these treacherous shifts on the part of Lee, he certainly never would have been taken back into the American service. As nothing whatever was known about the matter, he was exchanged for General Richard Prescott early in May, 1778, and joined Washington's army at Valley Forge. What a frightful situation for the Americans: to have, for the second officer in their army, the man whom the chances of war might at any moment invest with the chief command, such a man as this who had so lately been plotting their destruction! What would Washington, what would Congress, have thought, had the truth in its blackness been so much as dreamed of? But why, we may ask, did the intriguer come back? Why did he think it worth his while to pose once more in the attitude of an American? Could it have been with the intention of playing into the hands of the enemy? and could the British commander, knowing this purpose, have thus gladly acquiesced in his return? It is hard to say, but probably this explanation is too

simple to cover the case. We must remember that Sir William Howe, the Whig general, had just resigned his command and gone home to defend his military conduct against the fierce attacks of the king's party. His successor, Sir Henry Clinton, was not only a Tory, but the personal relations between the two were not altogether friendly; so that it is hardly credible that Clinton could have known anything about Lee's coöperation with Howe; if he had known it, the secret would not have been buried for eighty years. It is much more likely that, since the disastrous failure of Lee's advice, he was reduced to painful insignificance in the British camp, and so thought it worth while to try his fortune again with the Americans. The past year had seen the tables completely turned. The American star was now in the ascendant; most people expected to see the British driven to their ships before autumn; and Lord North's commissioners were on their way across the ocean, to offer terms of peace. While Lee could see all this, he could not see how greatly Washington's popular strength had increased during the past winter, as the intrigues against him had recoiled upon their authors. The days of the Conway cabal were really gone by, but this was not yet apparent to everybody. The ambitious schemes of Gates were frustrated, and Lee might now hope again to try his hand at supplanting Washington, with one more rival out of the way. Indeed, there is some reason for believing that the very schemers and sycophants who had been putting Gates forward were always ready, if occasion should offer, to drop him and take up Lee instead. Doubtless, therefore, Lee came back in the renewed hope of supplanting Washington.

Whether he can also have had any secret understandings with the enemy, it is hard to say. A very friendly letter from a British gentleman, George Johnson, dated at Philadelphia, the 17th of June, and addressed to General Lee at Valley Forge, observes in its postscript, "Sir Henry Clinton bids me thank you for your letter."<sup>1</sup> What this letter may have referred to, or whether it is still anywhere in existence, or whether there was any further correspondence between Clinton and Lee, we do not know. Sir Henry had, at any rate, probably seen and heard enough to confirm the declared opinion of Sir Joseph Yorke, that such a man as Charles Lee was "the worst present the Americans could receive." In the campaign just beginning he proved himself to be such.

When, in June, Sir Henry Clinton evacuated Philadelphia, it was his purpose to retreat across New Jersey to the city of New York without a battle, if possible. It was Washington's object to attack Clinton on his retreat, cut to pieces the rear division of his army, and thus essentially cripple him. Lee at first endeavoured to dissuade Washington from making such an attack. Then, when it was resolved to make the oblique attack upon the rear division, with the purpose of cutting it asunder from the advanced division, Lee showed such unwillingness to undertake the task that Washington assigned it to Lafayette. Each of the opposing armies numbered about fifteen thousand men, and since the arrival of Steuben, with his Prussian tactics and discipline, the quality of the American troops had been signally improved. Each army was marching in two divisions, three or four

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, II. 406.

miles apart. The American advance, of about six thousand men, under Lafayette, was to attack the British rear division upon its left flank and engage it until Washington, with the remainder of the army, should come up and complete its discomfiture. At the last moment Lee changed his mind and solicited the command of the advance. The nobleness of Washington's nature made him very kind in his judgments of other men. He was always ready to make allowances, and up to this time he had found some charitable interpretation for Lee's behaviour. Now he showed the defects of his excellence, and was too trustful. He so arranged matters that Lee should have the command, and Lafayette most gracefully yielded the point. Washington's orders to Lee were explicit and peremptory. On the morning of the 28th of June the advance division overtook the enemy near Monmouth Court House. The position was admirable for an oblique attack upon the British flank, and in the opinion of Anthony Wayne and other brigade commanders a prompt and spirited attack was called for. But the fighting had scarcely begun when Lee's conduct became so strange and his orders so contradictory as to excite uneasiness on the part of Lafayette, who sent a messenger back to Washington, urging him to make all possible haste to the front. When the commander-in-chief, with his main force, had passed Freehold church on his way toward the scene of action, he was astonished at the spectacle of Lee's division in disorderly retreat, with the enemy close upon their heels. A little farther on he met the faithless general. The men who then beheld Washington's face, and listened to his terrific outburst of

wrath, could never forget it for the rest of their lives.<sup>1</sup> It was one of those moments that live in tradition. People of to-day who know nothing else about Charles Lee think of him vaguely as the man whom Washington upbraided at Monmouth. People who know nothing else about the battle of Monmouth still dimly associate it with the disgrace of a General Lee. Leav-

<sup>1</sup> The following letter gives a version of the rebuke :—

“CHARLOTTEVILLE, VA., Oct. 26, 1895.

“PROFESSOR JOHN FISKE :—

“*Dear Sir* :— At your request, I have reduced to writing the incident I related to you last evening, at the reception, after your lecture upon General Charles Lee—‘The Soldier of Fortune.’

“I am, Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“WM. ROBERTSON.

“In the year 1840, while I was a student at Hampton, Sydney College, and boarding in the family of Mrs. Ann Rice (the widow of the Rev. John H. Rice, D.D.), her father, Major Jacob Morton, a Revolutionary soldier, living in an adjoining county (Cumberland), came to visit her. Major Morton was then upward of eighty years old, but still in full possession of all his mental faculties. . . .

“The talk at the dinner table was of his reminiscences of the Revolutionary War . . . the Battle of Monmouth. . . . I sought an opportunity of further conversation with him, and having heard or read that just before that battle General Washington, on meeting General Charles Lee in retreat, had ‘*cursed and swore*’ at him, I asked Major Morton whether that report was true. ‘No, sir ! No, sir !’ replied the major with animation. ‘It is not true ! It so happened that the meeting of General Washington with General Lee on that day took place within a very few yards of me, and I saw and heard all that passed between them. I will tell you how it was. Our troops were marching rapidly, expecting soon to be engaged with the British ; the day was very hot, the road heavy with sand, our men fatigued by the march. I was then a sergeant in my company and had frequently to face about in order to keep my platoon aligned on the march, — myself walking backwards. While doing so, I saw General Washington coming from the rear of our column, riding very rapidly along the right flank of the column ; and as he came nearer, my attention was fixed upon him with wonder and astonishment, for he was evidently under strong emo-

ing the cowering and trembling culprit, Washington hurried on to rally the troops and give the orders which turned impending defeat into victory. As he rode about the field, his suspicions of foul play were more and more thoroughly aroused, and presently, meeting Lee again, he ordered him to the rear. The

tion and excitement. I never saw such a countenance before. It was like a thunder-cloud before the flash of lightning. Just as he reached the flank of my platoon he reined up his horse a little, and raising his right hand high above his head, he cried out with a loud voice, "My God! General Lee, what are you about?" Until that moment I had not known that General Lee was near; but on turning my head a little to the left (still stepping backward on the march) I found that General Lee had ridden from the head of our column along our right flank and was only a few yards distant, in front of General Washington. In answer to General Washington's excited exclamation, "My God! General Lee, what are you about?" General Lee began to make some explanation; but General Washington impatiently interrupted him, and with his hand still raised high above his head, waving it angrily, exclaimed, "Go to the rear, sir," spurred his horse, and rode rapidly forward. The whole thing occurred as quickly as I can tell it to you.'

"This conversation with old Major Morton interested me profoundly and made a deep impression upon my memory. My recollection of it is still (after the lapse of about fifty-five years) clear and distinct. What I have written about it, if not in his very words, is substantially what he told me. The words, 'My God! General Lee, what are you about?' are the very words which he declared that General Washington uttered. I will add that Major Morton, in all the region of country in which he spent his long life, was reputed to be a man of the very highest integrity—no one who ever knew him ever doubted or questioned his veracity. Indeed, he was proverbial for honesty, courage, and veracity. Altho' only a sergeant at the date of the battle of Monmouth, he afterward rose to the rank of a major in the Revolutionary Army; and in the service acquired the sobriquet of 'Solid Column.' When, in 1825, General Lafayette revisited the United States, and held a levee at Richmond, Va., at which many of the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolution from various parts of the state of Virginia attended, and were successively presented to him; as Major Morton's turn came to be presented, Lafayette said, cordially, 'Oh, it is not necessary to introduce "old Solid Column" to me, I remember him well.'

"WM. ROBERTSON."

next day Lee, having recovered his self-possession and thought of a line of defence, wrote to Washington demanding an apology for his language on the battlefield. Washington replied that he believed his words to have been fully warranted by the circumstances, and added that a court-martial would soon afford General Lee an opportunity for explaining his conduct. "Quite right," answered Lee; "you cannot afford me greater pleasure than in giving me the opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that the temporary power of office, and the personal dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to obfuscate the bright rays of truth."<sup>1</sup> Washington answered by placing Lee under arrest. He was tried by court-martial on three charges: (1) Disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy. (2) Misbehaviour before the enemy in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat. (3) Gross disrespect to the commander-in-chief. On the 12th of August he was found guilty on all the charges, and suspended from all command in the army for the term of one year.

For a long time Lee's conduct at Monmouth seemed quite unintelligible. The discoveries since made regarding his behaviour in captivity do not yet clear it, though they make it seem susceptible of the worst interpretation. If we suppose that he was actually in collusion with Clinton, the simplest supposition is that he intended to wreck the army; and certainly few things could be better calculated to do so than throwing a mass of disorderly fugitives in the face of the advancing reënforcements. But I believe the t

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, II. 437.

explanation is not quite so simple as this. It does not seem probable that there was any secret understanding with Clinton. It is much more likely that Lee was again at his old trick of trying to discredit and supplant Washington. With this end in view he first loudly condemned Washington's plan of battle and refused to take the part assigned him. On second thought it occurred to him that by taking that command he might insure the defeat of Washington's plan, and still bring off the army to such a position that he might claim the credit for having saved it from the effects of Washington's rashness. This explanation is indicated by the line of defence which he chose upon his trial. His retreat lay across two deep ravines, and it was upon the brink of the second one that Washington met him. He argued ingeniously before the court-martial that if he had attacked as Washington directed, the result would have been disastrous; but in his retreat he was simply luring the enemy across these ravines into a position where he could suddenly turn upon him and defeat him with a dangerous ravine at his back. All this would have been done, he declared, if Washington had not come up and spoiled the game. This explanation may have been concocted after the event; but it is not unlikely that Lee may really have entertained some such wild scheme. A very difficult plan it would be to carry out, especially with his brigade commanders all hopelessly bewildered. Confusion could not but result, and well indeed it was that the reins of the runaway team were suddenly seized by the powerful hand of Washington.

Such is the explanation least unfavourable to Lee. Even on his own showing it is one of the most out-



rageous cases of insubordination recorded in the annals of war. But one incident, mentioned in the testimony of Steuben, throws perhaps the blackest shade upon the conduct of this miserable creature. After Lee had been ordered to the rear, as he rode away baffled and spiteful, he met Steuben with a couple of brigades hurrying to the front in pursuance of an order just received from Washington. Lee now tried to turn him off in another direction, alleging that the order was misunderstood. But the good baron was not to be trifled with and resolutely kept on his way.<sup>1</sup> Lee was so enraged at this testimony that he made reflections upon Steuben, which presently called forth a challenge from that gentleman.<sup>2</sup> That "sprightliness of imagination" heretofore mentioned seems now to have deserted our soldier of fortune. It is to be regretted that we have not the reply in which he declined the encounter. There is a reference to it in a letter from Alexander Hamilton to the Baron von Steuben, a fortnight after the challenge: "I have read your letter to Lee with pleasure. It was conceived in terms which the offence merited, and if he had any feeling, must have been felt by him. Considering the pointedness and severity of your expressions, his answer was certainly a very modest one, and proved that he had not a violent appetite for so close a *tête-à-tête* as you seemed disposed to insist upon. His evasions, if known to the world, would do him very little honour."<sup>3</sup> Upon what grounds Lee refused to fight with Steuben, it is hard to surmise; for within another week we find him engaged in a duel with

<sup>1</sup> Lee Papers, III. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 253.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 254.

Washington's aide-de-camp, Colonel Laurens, for whom Hamilton acted as second.<sup>1</sup> In this affair Lee was slightly wounded in the right arm. His venomous tongue now kept getting him into trouble more than ever. He could not hear Washington's name mentioned without losing his temper. After some time he addressed one of his impudent letters to Congress, and was immediately dismissed from the army. He retired in disgrace to his estate in the Shenandoah valley, and lived there long enough to witness the final triumph of the cause he had done so much to injure. On a visit to Philadelphia he was suddenly seized with a fever, and died in a tavern, friendless and alone, on the 2d of October, 1782. His last words, uttered in delirium, were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!" A scoffer to the last, he had expressed in his will a wish that he might not be buried within a mile of any church or meeting-house, as since his arrival in America he had kept so much bad company in this world that he did not wish to continue it in the next. He was buried, however, in the cemetery of Christ Church, and his funeral was attended by the President of Congress and other eminent citizens.

General Lee was one of the numerous persons credited with the authorship of the famous "Letters of Junius," and the way in which this came to pass is worthy of notice for the further illustration it affords of his character. In a letter dated at Dover, February 1, 1803, published in the *Wilmington Mirror* and copied into the *St. James Chronicle*, London, Mr. Thomas Rodney gave the substance of a conversation between himself and General Lee in 1773. That

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* 283.

was the year when Lee came to America and travelled up and down the country in order to impress upon the minds of our people his great importance in the European world. In the course of this conversation Lee observed that not a man in the world but himself, not even the publisher, knew the secret of the authorship of "Junius." Rodney naturally replied that no one but the author himself could make such a remark as that. Lee started. "I have unguardedly committed myself," said he, "and it would be folly to deny you that I am the author; but I must request you will not reveal it during my life, for it never was and never will be revealed by me to any other." Lee then went on to point out several circumstances corroborative of his claim. Such a statement, from a gentleman of such high character as Mr. Rodney, at once attracted attention in Europe and America. Two intimate friends of Lee maintained opposite sides of the question. Ralph Wormeley of Virginia published a letter in which he argued that Lee was very far from possessing the knowledge of parliamentary history exhibited in the pages of "Junius." Daniel McCarthy of North Carolina published a series of articles in the *Virginia Gazette* in refutation of Wormeley. Dr. Thomas Girdlestone of Yarmouth, England, followed on the same side in a small volume entitled, "Facts tending to prove that General Lee was never absent from this country for any length of time during the years 1767-1772, and that he was the author of 'Junius.'" This curious little book was published in London in 1813. The first part of Dr. Girdlestone's title points to the fatal obstacle to his hypothesis. The simple fact is that Lee was absent in such remote countries as

Poland and Turkey at the very dates when "Junius" was publishing letters exhibiting such minute and detailed acquaintance with affairs every day occurring in London as could only have been possessed by an eye-witness living on the spot. This fact makes it impossible that he should have written the "Letters of Junius"; and Mr. Rodney's statement only goes to show that, in other than military matters, the soldier of fortune was willing to claim what did not belong to him.

Such was the man to whom some of our great-grandfathers were at times almost ready to intrust the destinies of their country rather than to George Washington! When we consider how narrowly the cause of American independence escaped total wreck at the hands of this unprincipled adventurer, the thought is enough to make us shudder after the hundred years that have passed. In judging the character of the man, there may be found some who would urge that his eccentricities were so marked as perhaps to afford some ground for the plea of insanity whereby to palliate his misdemeanours. One will not grudge him the benefit of such a plea, in so far as it may have any value. His mind was no doubt ill balanced, or, to use one of his own favourite words, it was "unhinged" by colossal vanity and ravening selfishness; and accordingly, what chiefly strikes us now in reviewing his career is the contrast between his enormous pretensions and his unparalleled feebleness. We shall have to search the field of modern history far and wide to find his equal as a charlatan. In comparison with such a man even the figure of Benedict Arnold acquires dignity. We can imagine

the latter admired and trusted in some circles of the lower world. But Charles Lee belongs rather to that limbo described by Dante as the final home of those caitiff souls *a Dio spiacenti ed ai nemici sui*, too wicked for the one place, too weak for the other.

**III**

**ALEXANDER HAMILTON  
AND THE FEDERALIST PARTY**

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### III

#### ALEXANDER HAMILTON

#### AND THE FEDERALIST PARTY

THE 6th of July, 1774, was a memorable day in the history of New York. The question as to how far that colony would go in support of Massachusetts in its defiance of Parliament was pressing for an answer. Parliament had in April passed an act which deprived Massachusetts of her charter, and another which shut up the port of Boston until the town should see fit to pay the East India Company for the tea which had been thrown into the harbour. On the 1st of June Hutchinson had sailed for England, hoping through a personal interview with the king to effect a repeal of these tyrannical acts, and on the same day Thomas Gage, intrusted with the work of enforcing them, assumed military command over Massachusetts. Troops were encamped on Boston Common, frigates rode at anchor in the harbour, great merchantmen lay idle at the wharves while sailors and shipwrights roamed the streets or sat drinking in the taverns. The legislature was convened at Salem, where on the 17th Samuel Adams achieved a master stroke and carried the resolutions inviting all the sister colonies to join in a Continental Congress, to meet at Philadelphia on the 1st of September. Rhode Island and Maryland had at once elected delegates to attend the proposed Congress. In Virginia a convention was about to be




held, and such expressions of opinion had come from that quarter as to leave no doubt as to what its action would be. The time had arrived when New York must do something. But what she should do was hard to determine, for parties were quite evenly balanced.

The king, indeed, in his harsh measures against Massachusetts relied confidently upon the support of New York. He believed that his Tory friends there were in a decided majority, and they declared there would be no Congress. As for New York, they said, "She will never appoint delegates; Massachusetts must be made to feel that she is deserted." There was something more in this than the old local dislike between New York and New England. For thirteen years Massachusetts had been suffering acute irritation at the hands of crown officers, and her temper had thus grown so belligerent that in most parts of the country there was a disposition to regard her as perhaps a little too obstinate and fierce. There were people in New York who thought that both Massachusetts and the king were going too far, and persuaded themselves that the tea might be paid for without surrendering the principles which had led to its destruction. Some who were about to become eminent as Revolutionary leaders had not yet fully made up their minds. Tory politicians led in the Committee of Correspondence, and on the 4th of July, while it was decided to take part in the Congress, on the other hand the delegation which was appointed seemed to the extreme Whigs too conservative in character. The Sons of Liberty, who feared that Massachusetts would not find due support in the Con-

gress, were well represented in the city of New York. At their head were the merchants, Isaac Sears and Alexander Macdougall, and the eloquent lawyer, John Morin Scott. The Tories used to sneer at these men as "the Presbyterian junto." They wished to reconsider the action of the committee, and to make a popular demonstration which would go as far as possible toward committing New York to espouse the cause of Massachusetts. Accordingly, on the 6th of July, a great meeting of citizens was held in the fields north of the city, with the canny Scotchman, Macdougall, as chairman. Many eminent speakers addressed the meeting, but among the hearers was a lad of seventeen years, small and slight in stature, who listened with intense eagerness as he felt that, besides all that was said, there were other weighty arguments which seemed to occur to nobody. At length, unable to keep silence any longer, he rose to his feet, and somewhat timidly at first, but gathering courage every moment, he addressed the astonished company. His arguments compelled assent, while his dignified eloquence won admiration, and when he had finished there was a buzz of inquiry as to who this extraordinary boy could be. There were some who had seen him walking back and forth under the shade of some large trees in Dey Street, absorbed in meditation and now and then muttering to himself; a few knew him as "the young West Indian"; on further inquiry, it appeared that he was a student at King's College, and his name was Alexander Hamilton.

Instances of marvellous precocity are more often found in mathematics, or linguistics, or music, than in political science; for in the latter case something

more than consecutive thinking or tenacious memory or a fine artistic sense are required; there is needed an insight into human nature and the conditions of human life such as can hardly be acquired save by long years of experience. Seldom has there been such a case as that of Hamilton. His intellect seemed to have sprung forth in full maturity, like Pallas from the brain of Zeus. What little is known of his childhood and youth can be told in few words. Alexander Hamilton was born upon the island of Nevis, in the West Indies, on the 11th of January, 1757. His father belonged to the famous Scottish family of the Hamiltons of Grange, his mother was daughter of a Huguenot gentleman named Fawcette, who had fled to the West Indies after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was equally at home in the English and French languages. His father fell into financial difficulties, and his mother died during his childhood, so that he was placed at school at Santa Cruz under the care of some of her relatives. His school studies were accompanied by a wide course of miscellaneous reading, assisted by the advice of Dr. Hugh Knox, a kindly and sagacious Presbyterian minister and a graduate of Princeton. Before his thirteenth birthday he entered the counting-house of Nicholas Cruger, a merchant, who carried on a very considerable business. Here his wonderful precocity soon showed itself. Business letters of his, written at that period, have been preserved which would do credit to a trained business man; and before the boy had been a year in the house, his employer, having occasion to leave the island, intrusted its entire management to him. In spite of this extraordinary apti-



tude, for the work he felt no special fondness. In a letter dated just two months before he was thirteen, he thus unbosomed himself to a schoolmate: "To confess my weakness, Ned, my ambition is prevalent, so that I contemn the grovelling ambition of a clerk, or the like, to which my fortune condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hope of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity. I'm no philosopher, you see, and may be justly said to build castles in the air; my folly makes me ashamed, and beg you'll conceal it. Yet, Neddy, we have seen such schemes successful, when the projector is constant. I shall conclude by saying, I wish there was a war."

The reading of Plutarch has awakened generous ambition in many a youthful mind. Hamilton "prepared the way for futurity" by studying and commenting upon this author, and by trying his hand at literary composition. In August, 1772, the island was visited by a terrible hurricane; and a remarkable description of it, published in a newspaper at St. Christopher, attracted general attention throughout the British West Indies. The authorship was traced to Hamilton; it was decided that such literary talent required wider opportunities than were furnished on the islands; the needful funds were raised by subscription; and before the end of October the boy's romantic temperament was at once gratified and stimulated, as he found himself on board ship headed for Boston, with potent letters of introduction from Dr. Knox in his pocket. The connection with this

Presbyterian divine led him to New Jersey, where he entered a grammar school at Elizabethtown, and for a while made his home in the house of William Livingston. There he was introduced to the best society, and met many good friends, among them John Jay, who was soon to marry one of the four charming daughters. A full year had not passed when he was declared fit to enter Princeton, and he called upon Dr. Witherspoon, the able president, with the request that he might be allowed to advance toward his degree as fast as he could pass the examinations, and without regard to the prescribed curriculum. When the request was refused by the trustees as vain and unreasonable, he repaired to New York, and succeeded in entering King's College (now Columbia) upon his own terms.

This was late in the autumn of 1773, the stirring season of the Boston Tea Party. Hamilton's wish for a war was soon to be gratified. His childhood had been passed in an atmosphere of loyalism; he knew little as yet of American politics; his instincts were then, as always, in favour of strong government, and opposed to anything that looked like insurrection, and his first impressions leaned toward the Tory side. But he had hardly been six months at college when he happened to visit Boston, about the time when news arrived of the vindictive acts of Parliament and the appointment of a military governor. It was a good place and a good time for comprehending the true character of the political situation. The young man mastered the arguments with his usual swiftness and thoroughness, and returned to New

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York in time to exert a powerful influence upon the great assemblage in the fields. The practical result of the meeting was seen a few weeks later, when the delegates embarked at Cortlandt Street to the sound of drum and trumpet, pledged to "support at the risk of everything dear" such resolutions as the Continental Congress might see fit to adopt.

Soon after the Congress had adjourned in October, to await the results of its action upon the British government, its proceedings were adversely criticised in two able pamphlets written jointly by two Episcopal clergymen, the famous Samuel Seabury, afterward Bishop of Connecticut, and Isaac Wilkins of Westchester County. The pamphlets, which purported to come from "A Westchester Farmer," cast dismay into the ranks of the Whigs. They were extremely plausible, and were already making converts, when within a fortnight there appeared an anonymous tract in vindication of Congress, which at once threw the "Farmer" upon the defensive, and ruffled his temper withal, as his next pamphlet showed. The anonymous writer returned to the charge with a voluminous essay quite properly entitled "The Farmer Refuted"; it completely unhorsed and disarmed the adversary; the two ministers had no more to say. Great curiosity was felt as to the anonymous writer. Some thought it must be Jay, others his father-in-law, Livingston. When it was at length ascertained that it was a boy of eighteen, and the same boy that had addressed the meetings in the fields, the astonishment was profound. There was no trace of immaturity in thought or expression in his two essays, and their boldness of tone was accompanied by a grasp of the political situation

that must seem even more remarkable to-day than it did at the time, since we can appreciate the writer's foresight as contemporaries necessarily could not. At the beginning of 1775 very few leaders, even in Massachusetts or Virginia, were in favour of independence. The author of "The Farmer Refuted" hints at independence as the possible outcome of the quarrel, indicates a Fabian military policy as most likely to baffle Great Britain, and surmises that France and even Spain might find it for their interest to take part in the struggle. That such advanced views could have been even suggested without weakening the effect of the pamphlet shows a tact and an artfulness of statement not less remarkable than the other qualities of the young writer.

It was not long before the news of Lexington wrought the excitement in New York to fever heat. There were street fights between Tories and Whigs, and here Hamilton's hatred of anarchy was well illustrated. To him independence was one thing, mob law quite another. A party of rioters beset the house of Dr. Cooper, the Tory president of the college, with intent to seize him and in some way maltreat him. Hamilton got into the foremost rank of the crowd till he reached the door-step, then faced about and addressed the rioters, and held them at bay while the doctor escaped through the back garden and took refuge on the deck of a British seventy-four. Presently, when Isaac Sears raised a troop of horse over in Connecticut and dashed into New York at their head to attack Rivington's Tory printing-press, Hamilton incurred no little risk in confronting them with arguments and expostulations. The press was destroyed

and the Tory type carried off to Connecticut to be melted into Whig bullets.<sup>1</sup>

By this time the boy was ranked among the leading spirits of the Whig party. He had already begun to study the military art, and now joined a corps of young men, chiefly college students, known as "Hearts of Oak." They wore green coats and leather caps adorned with the motto, "Freedom or Death," and they were drilled and paraded daily until they became a model of discipline. On the 14th of March, 1776, Hamilton was appointed captain of the first company of artillery raised by the state. Presently the thoroughness of its drill and the grace of its movements caught the keen eye of that great genius and eager military student, Nathanael Greene, who arrived in New York on the 17th of April. Greene was so impressed that he sought Hamilton's acquaintance and spoke of him enthusiastically to Washington. The young captain and his company did good service at the battle of Long Island and the retreat which followed; and again at White Plains and Trenton and Princeton. On the 1st of March, 1777, he accepted a position on Washington's staff, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. It was with some reluctance that he took this place, for he had been looking forward to promotion in the line; but what he lost in one direction he probably more than gained in another, through the peculiarly intimate relations into which he entered with Washington. His great work was to be, not that of a general, but of a statesman; and there was no place more favourable than Washington's staff for studying minutely into the causes of the miserable weakness

<sup>1</sup> Morse's "Hamilton," I. 19.



which the imperfect union between the states entailed upon the whole country, or for discussing the most proper measures for remedying this condition of affairs through the establishment of a more perfect union. The impossibility of raising a national revenue, save from precarious foreign loans or the wretched expedient of issuing promissory notes without any discoverable means of paying them, was a source of perpetual anxiety to the commander-in-chief. The consequences of this poverty were daily brought home to his headquarters in the difficulty of enlisting troops, or of supplying them with clothing and ammunition, or of paying them even a small instalment of wages overdue. At the end of the war there was no one who could have told better than Hamilton how hard it had sometimes proved to keep the army from melting away, or how many times some promising military scheme had been nipped in the bud for want of supplies, while men in Congress and in the state legislatures were wondering why Washington could not march without shoes, sup without food, fight without powder, and defeat a well-equipped and well-fed enemy that outnumbered him two to one. No one understood better than Hamilton that, but for the radical want of efficiency in the government of the confederation, such obstacles would have been far less formidable, and the enemy might much sooner have been driven from the country. No doubt the daily intercourse for four years between Washington and his confidential aide added much to the strength of both, and to the effectiveness with which they were afterward able to reënforce one another in contributing to found a better government. Almost from the outset Washington

consulted Hamilton more frequently than the other members of his staff and intrusted the most weighty affairs to his charge. It was remarkable that this preference, accorded to so young a man, should have excited no jealousy. But the "little lion," as the older officers called him, was so frank and good-natured, so buoyant and brave, and so free from arrogance, that he won all the hearts. There was a mixture in him of Scottish shrewdness with French vivacity that most people found irresistible. Knox and Laurens, Lafayette and Steuben, loved him with devoted affection.

Along with the desire to please, which was one secret of his attractiveness, there was a due amount of sternness latent, as appeared when occasion called for it. If necessary, the "little lion" could command in a tone that made weaker creatures tremble. All his tact and all his imperiousness were required on his mission to Saratoga after Burgoyne's surrender, to get back the troops which Washington had sent to Gates and which the latter no longer needed. Gates was more than ready to leave Washington in the lurch, as Charles Lee had done the year before. In Congress there was so strong a party opposed to Washington that to offend his unscrupulous rival while all the glamour of victory surrounded him would not be timely. The skill with which this young man, not yet one-and-twenty, wrested the troops from the reluctant Gates, peremptorily asserting Washington's claim, yet never allowing the affair to develop into a quarrel, was simply marvellous.

As a staff officer Hamilton was present at the battles of the Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth; he was Colonel Laurens's second in the duel between

that officer and Charles Lee; and at West Point he was the first to receive and read the papers taken from André's stockings and containing the melancholy proofs of Arnold's treason. He saw much of André and of Mrs. Arnold, and his letters give a most touching description of the affair. Soon after this his connection with Washington's staff came abruptly to an end. On the 16th of February, 1781, as Washington was going up the stairs at his headquarters at New Windsor, he met Hamilton coming down and told him that he wished to speak to him. Hamilton, who was on his way downstairs to deliver an important order, replied that he would return in a moment. On his way back he was met by Lafayette, who accosted him on some pressing matter of business. In his impatience to return upstairs he cut Lafayette short in a manner which, as he says, but for their intimacy would have been more than abrupt. He was not aware of having consumed more than two minutes altogether, but when he reached the head of the staircase he found Washington waiting there, and these words were exchanged: —

"Colonel Hamilton, you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect."

"I am not conscious of it, sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part."

"Very well, sir, if it be your choice."

And so they parted. At first sight the breaking of such an important relation on such a slight occasion seems silly, and Hamilton's reply to his commander childishly petulant. But Washington's temper was hasty. That he believed himself to have reproved his

young friend unjustly was shown by his sending an aide to him a few moments afterward, with what was virtually an apology and a request that he would reconsider his decision. Hamilton, however, had for some time wished to leave the staff for a place in the line, and now that the matter had taken this shape he preferred to let it remain so. Any resentment he expressly disclaimed, and it does not appear that the cordial friendship between the two men was in the least disturbed by this little episode. Hamilton presently obtained the opportunity which he coveted, and in the Yorktown campaign commanded a body of light infantry in Lafayette's division, at the head of which he stormed one of the British redoubts with signal valour. This was the end of his military career. On his mission to General Gates he had become acquainted with Elizabeth, daughter of General Schuyler, and their marriage took place on the 14th of December, 1780. In the spring of 1782, as soon as it became evident that the war was over, Hamilton removed to Albany, and in July was admitted to the bar.

Other business than law practice, however, came up to occupy his attention. We have seen how forcibly the weakness of the government and the need for revenue had been brought home to Washington's staff officer. He had pondered deeply on these subjects, and had already conceived the scheme of an alliance of interests between the federal government and the moneyed class of society. One of the instruments by which the alliance was to be effected was a national bank, which was to be a corporation in private hands, but to some extent supported and controlled by Con-

gress. He also advocated extending the powers of the federal government and placing the departments of war and finance in the hands of individuals instead of committees. His views made a great impression upon Robert Morris, who was appointed in 1781 superintendent of finance. In December of that year the Bank of North America was established, and Hamilton must share with Robert and Gouverneur Morris the authorship of that scheme. About the time he entered the bar he was appointed continental receiver of taxes for the state of New York. In that capacity he visited the legislature at Poughkeepsie, had an earnest conference with a committee of both houses, and presently the legislature actually passed resolutions calling for a convention of all the states for the purpose of enlarging the powers of Congress, especially with regard to taxation. Nothing ever came of this action, but in view of the subsequent course of New York, it is remarkable that Hamilton's first attempt should have succeeded so well. But there can be little doubt that between 1782 and 1788 the politics of New York were somewhat corrupted by her custom-house. In the general confusion she found herself prospering at the expense of her neighbours, and the strength of the Anti-federalist or Clintonian party was naturally increased by that circumstance; it would have been so in any state.

In October, 1782, the New York legislature chose Hamilton as one of its delegates to Congress. There he first came into familiar contact with Madison, and met James Wilson, with others of less note; and there he witnessed some months of barren and almost purposeless wrangling which convinced him that

nothing was to be hoped from any attempt at reform which should stop short with the mere amending of the confederation; it must be entirely superseded by a stronger government. On every proposal which looked toward amendment he took the affirmative and argued with his accustomed power that nothing was accomplished. This winter's experience doubtless increased his disgust at the jealousies and the perpetual jarring between the states. Hamilton's own position was peculiar in so far as he was not a native of any one of the states, and had from his first connection with public affairs felt more interest in the country as a whole than in any part of it. His attitude, therefore, was such as to enable him to move much more freely and directly toward the construction of a national government than any of his contemporaries. Another effect of so much fruitless discussion may well have been to confirm his distrust of popular government. For what an Athenian would have called the rule of the many-headed King Demos he never had much liking. He could see much more clearly than the men around him many of the things that were needed and the most efficient means for obtaining them; and there was in his temperament an impatience and an imperiousness that made him irk at the dulness of his fellow-creatures and the length of time required to set their common sense to work in the right direction. He was a devoted friend to free government; not, however, to that kind of free government in which the people rule, but the kind in which they are ruled by an upper class, with elaborate safeguards against the abuse of power. To such views Hamilton was predisposed by nature; his intimate experience of the

contrast between Washington's efficiency and the inefficiency of Congress had done much to confirm them; his own winter of hard work in Congress no doubt confirmed them still more. Every man has the defects of his excellences, and this element of narrowness in Hamilton's view of popular government was closely related to the qualities that made him so pre-eminent as a constructive thinker.

One winter of such hopeless work was for the present enough for Hamilton. In 1783 he returned to the practice of law and began rising rapidly at the bar. Even in his professional practice he had an opportunity to figure as a defender of the federal government against the state sovereignty. Just as it was in later years with Daniel Webster, his first famous law case stood in a noticeable relation to his career as a statesman. Hamilton was honourably distinguished for his vigorous condemnation of the cruel and silly persecution to which the Tories, especially in New York, were subjected after the close of the war. His first great case, in 1784, was one in which the treaty obligations of the United States to protect the Tories from further abuse came into conflict with a persecuting act which the New York legislature had lately passed against such people. There was then no federal Supreme Court, or any other federal court, in which such questions could be settled. The case was one which must begin and end in the state courts of New York, and its bearing upon the political question was rather implied than asserted. It was a case in which, if the state law were upheld, a poor widow would recover property of which the vicissitudes of war deprived her; but if the state law were set aside, a

mass of spoliation would be prevented in comparison with which the widow's affair was the veriest trifle. Popular sympathy was wholly with the widow and against her Tory opponent, and in acting as counsel for the latter Hamilton showed such moral courage as had hardly been called for in any law case since John Adams and Josiah Quincy defended the British soldiers concerned in the so-called Boston Massacre. That he should have won his case against a hostile court, in such a moment of popular excitement, was hardly to be expected. That he did win it, and in so doing overturn the state law in question, was a marvellous feat, — the strongest proof one could wish of his unrivalled power as an advocate. The decision of the court was followed by a war of pamphlets in which Hamilton again won the day, and went far toward changing the public sentiment. At this moment there entered upon his life the ominous shadow of the duel, that social pest, which by and by, under other circumstances and at other hands, was to cut him off in the very prime of his powers and usefulness. A club of blatant pothouse politicians proposed to take turns in calling him out until some one of them should have the good fortune to kill him; but the wild scheme came to naught.

Two more years elapsed while Hamilton was engaged in professional work, and then Virginia, under the lead of Madison, called for a convention of all the states at Annapolis, to consider the feasibility of establishing a uniform system of commercial regulations for the whole country. Here Hamilton saw his opportunity, and succeeded in getting New York to appoint delegates, with himself among them. When the con-



vention met in September, 1786, only five states were represented, so that the only thing worth while to do was to try again and call another convention. It was Hamilton who wrote the address calling for a convention at Philadelphia, to meet in the following May, to consider the best means of clothing the federal government with powers adequate for the maintenance of order and the preservation of the Union. It was high time for such work to be undertaken, for the whole country was falling under the sway of the lord of misrule. Congress was bankrupt, foreign nations were scoffing at us, Connecticut had barely escaped from war with Pennsylvania and New York from New Hampshire, there were riots and bloodshed in Vermont, Rhode Island seemed on the verge of civil war, Massachusetts was actually engaged in suppressing armed rebellion, Connecticut and New Jersey were threatening commercial non-intercourse with New York. Spain was defying us at the mouth of the Mississippi, and a party in Virginia was entertaining the idea of a separate Southern confederacy. Under such circumstances it was necessary to act quickly, and it was Hamilton's business to see that New York was represented in the convention. To that end he succeeded in getting elected to the legislature, and spent the winter in a hard fight against the party that was opposed to a clear union of the states. That party was very strong. At its head was the governor, George Clinton, who preferred to remain the most powerful citizen of New York rather than occupy a subordinate place under a national government in which his own state was not foremost. The policy of local high tariffs directed against the neighbouring states had been

temporarily successful, although it was already threatening New York with a war. Though some of the most intelligent people in the state understood the shortsightedness of the governor's policy, the multitude were always ready to throw up their caps and shout, "Hurrah for Clinton!" It was this unreasoning popular support that made Clinton at that moment the most formidable enemy then living in the United States to all schemes and movements that tended toward a closer union. Here again the circumstances were such as naturally to strengthen Hamilton's hatred of democracy. Here was democracy confronting him with intent to thwart and prevent the work to which he had now come to consecrate his life.

This was a hot fight. At length Hamilton, with the valuable aid of Schuyler and the Livingstons, won a victory, such as it was. Delegates were indeed chosen, so that New York was not unrepresented in the convention, like Rhode Island. Hamilton was one of these delegates, so that he was to have a chance to express his views and make his influence felt. But every effort to obtain more than three delegates was voted down, and Hamilton's two colleagues, Robert Yates and John Lansing, were uncompromising Anti-federalists, so that it was perfectly certain that he would never succeed in the convention in carrying the vote of New York for one single measure looking toward the fulfilment of the objects for which that convention had been called.

Thus hampered, the share which Hamilton took in the debates of the convention was a small one. He could only express his individual preferences, well knowing that as soon as it came to a vote his two colleagues

would overrule him. To have disputed every point would simply have emphasized the fact that he did not really represent his own state, and would thus have impaired his usefulness. So he threw all his force into one great speech. Early in the proceedings, after various plans of government had been laid before the convention, he took the occasion to present his own view of the general subject. Only an outline of his speech, which took five hours in delivery, has been preserved. Gouverneur Morris said it was the most impressive speech he ever heard in his life. In the course of it Hamilton read his own carefully prepared plan, of which we need only notice the two cardinal features. *First*, he would have had the President and senators elected by persons possessed of a certain amount of landed property, and he would have had them hold office for life or during good behaviour. This would have created an aristocratic republic, as near to an elective monarchy with a life peerage as one could very well get. *Secondly*, he would have aimed a death-blow, not merely at state sovereignty, but at state rights, by giving the President the appointment of the several state governors, who were to have a veto on the acts of their legislatures. If such a measure as this had been adopted, the Union in all probability would not have lasted a dozen years. The position of a governor appointed by any power outside the state would have borne altogether too much likeness to the position of the royal governors before the Revolution. The will of the people, as expressed by the state legislature, would have been liable at any moment to be overruled by a governor who, whether a native of the state or not, would have owed his position to considerations which

might be antagonistic to the policy of the state. The clashing between imperial and local interests might not have been so violent as before the Revolution, but there would have been so much to remind people of the old state of things that the new government would have been discredited from the start.

It seems clear, then, that in this suggestion Hamilton did not show his wonted sagacity. He failed to understand what was really sound and valuable in state rights, and this was not at all strange in a man who, having been born outside of the United States, was at this very moment contending against the extreme state sovereignty doctrines of New York and her narrow-minded governor.

Fortunately, however, there was not the slightest chance of Hamilton's extreme views prevailing in the convention, and this he knew as well as any one. His suggestions, it was said, were praised by everybody, but followed by no one. Presently urgent business called him home, and his two colleagues quit the convention in disgust, so that New York was left without representation there. Toward the close he returned to Philadelphia, and when the draft of the federal Constitution was completed, he made an eloquent speech, urging all the delegates to sign it. No man's ideas, he said, could be more remote from the plan than his were known to be; but was it possible for a true patriot to deliberate between anarchy and civil war, on the one side, and the chance of good to be expected from this plan, on the other? This was the spirit of the true statesman, and in this spirit he signed alone for New York.

The "Empire State" has had many illustrious citi-

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zens, but to none does she owe such a debt of gratitude as to Alexander Hamilton for inscribing her name on this immortal record. In the desperate struggle which followed, every inch of ground once gained counted as a victory; and it was much that when the Constitution was first published to the world the name of New York was attached to it.

In the ten months which followed the close of the convention we see Hamilton at the most interesting period of his life. Still buoyant with youthful energy, just finishing his thirty-first year, his rare flexibility of mind was now most strikingly illustrated. Like a wise statesman, when he could not get the whole loaf, he made the most that he could out of the half. His noble, disinterested patriotism, not content with leading him to sign a constitution of which he only half approved, now urged him to defend it with matchless ability in the papers which make up that immortal volume, the "Federalist." The Constitution, as finally adopted by the convention, was very far from being the work of any one man, but Madison's share in framing it had been very great, and it represented his theory of government much more nearly than Hamilton's. The thoroughness, however, with which Hamilton made the whole work his own, is well illustrated by the difficulty in deciding from internal evidence what parts of the "Federalist" were written by him and what parts by Madison. In the controversy which has been waged upon this question, it has been shown that we can seldom light upon such distinctive features of treatment and style as to lead to a sure conclusion. This shows how completely the two writers were for the moment at one, and it shows Hamilton's marvellous

adaptability. It also illustrates one characteristic of his style. Had he been endowed with a gorgeous poetical imagination like Burke, or had he been a master of rhetoric in the same sense as Webster, there could never have been any difficulty in distinguishing between his writing and Madison's. But Hamilton's style was a direct appeal to man's reason; and the wonder of it was that he could accomplish by such a direct appeal what most men cannot accomplish without calling into play the various arts of the rhetorician. To make a bare statement of facts and conclusions in such a way that unwilling minds cannot choose but accept them is a rare gift indeed. But while this was Hamilton's secret, it was to some extent Madison's also. Though a much less brilliant man in many ways, in this one respect Madison approached Hamilton, though he did not quite equal him. Hence, as it seems to me, the general similarity of style throughout the disputed numbers of the "Federalist."


As the speeches in Xenophon's "Anabasis" give one a very brief opinion of the intelligence of the Greek soldiers to whom such arguments might even be supposed to be addressed, so the essays in the "Federalist" give one a very high opinion of the intelligence of our great-grandfathers. The American people have never received a higher compliment than in having had such a book addressed to them. That they deserved it was shown by the effect produced, and it is in this democratic appeal to the general intelligence that we get the pleasantest impression of Hamilton's power.

The most remarkable exhibition of it, however, was in the state convention at Poughkeepsie, in June and July, 1788, for considering the question as to ratifying

the federal Constitution. Ten of the thirteen states had now ratified it, or one more than the number necessary for putting it into operation. The laggards were New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island. The latter state, isolated between her two stronger neighbours, might be left out of account for the moment, and so might North Carolina, for owing to the slavery compromises South Carolina had become intensely Federalist, a fact of cardinal importance in the history of the next thirty years. But as for New York, she could not for a moment be disregarded. Though not yet one of the greatest states, her position made her supremely important. It had been so in the days of Stuyvesant, and of Frontenac, and of Montcalm, and of Burgoyne; and just so it was in the days of George Clinton. If he could have carried his point, our federal Union, cut in twain by the Mohawk and Hudson valleys, would have had but a short life. That he did not carry it was mainly due to Hamilton's wonderful power of striking directly home at the sober reason of his fellow-men. It is not so very often that we see one man convince another by sheer argument. When passions and prejudices are enlisted, it is seldom that either side will budge an inch. The more they argue the more obstinate they grow, and if the affair gets settled, it is usually by some sort of compromise, in which each side tries to comfort itself with the belief that it has overreached the other. In the New York convention of 1788 there was no chance for compromise; the question as to ratifying the constitution must be answered with Yes or No; and if the vote had been taken at the beginning two-thirds of the members would have voted No. At the head of the Anti-feder-

alist forces was Melancthon Smith, an extremely able debater, no mean antagonist even for Hamilton. He must have been a man of rare candour, too, for after weeks of debate he owned himself convinced. The Clintonian ranks were thus fatally broken, and the decisive vote showed a narrow majority of three in favour of the Constitution. Seldom, indeed, has the human tongue won such a victory. It was the Waterloo of Anti-federalism. In the festivities that followed in the city of New York, when the emblematic federal ship — the ship of state — was drawn through the streets, it was with entire justice that the name of Hamilton was emblazoned upon her side.

A new chapter was now to begin in Hamilton's career. President Washington, in endeavouring to represent in his cabinet the nation rather than a party, selected Jefferson as his Secretary of State and Hamilton as his Secretary of the Treasury. Nothing but strife could come out of such relations between two such powerful and antagonistic natures. The dissensions between the two leaders and the great division between American parties arose gradually but rapidly, as Hamilton's bold, aggressive financial policy declared itself. It was a time when bold measures were needed. At home and abroad American credit was dead, because the Continental Congress had no power to tax the people and therefore could get no money to pay its debts. Now, under the new Constitution the House of Representatives could tax the people, and the problem for Hamilton was to suggest the best means of using this new, unfamiliar, and unpopular power, so as to obtain a steady revenue from the very start without arousing too much hostility. A preliminary part





of the problem was to decide what was to be done with the mass of public debt already incurred. There were three kinds of such debt. First, there were the sums due to foreign governments for money lent to the United States for carrying on the War of Independence. Everybody agreed that this class of debts must be paid to the uttermost farthing. Secondly, there were the debts due to American citizens who had invested their money in Continental securities. Hamilton's proposal that these should be paid in full, interest as well as principal, met with some opposition. In the chaos which had hitherto prevailed, such securities had fallen greatly in value, and the first glimmer of a better state of things showed that speculators had been buying them up in hopes of a rise. It was now argued that, by redeeming all such securities at their full value, the government would be benefiting the speculators rather than repaying the original investors. But Hamilton understood clearly that, with nations as with individuals, credit can be maintained only by paying one's debts in full, without asking what is going to become of the money. After some discussion this view prevailed in Congress.

Over the third class of debts there was a fierce dispute. These were the debts owed by the several state governments to private citizens. Much distress had ensued from the inability of the states to discharge these obligations. The discontent in Massachusetts, which had culminated in Shays's rebellion, was partly traceable to such a cause. On every side creditors were clamorous. Nothing would go so far toward strengthening the new government as to allay this agitation and awaken a feeling of confidence in busi-

ness circles. To this end Hamilton came forth with a measure of startling boldness. He proposed that the federal government should assume all these state debts and pay them, principal and interest !

This was no doubt a master stroke of policy. It was one of the most important steps taken by Washington's administration toward setting the new government fairly upon its feet. Had it not been for this act of assumption state creditors would have been so jealous of national creditors, there would have been such a jumble of clashing interests, that no steady financial policy could have been carried out, and people would soon have been impatiently asking wherein was the new government any better than the old. But by this act of assumption all public creditors, from Maine to Georgia, were at once made national creditors, and all immediately began to feel a personal interest in strengthening the federal government. This measure of Hamilton's was as shrewd as his idea of having governors appointed by the President had been foolish. That, if adopted, would have sought to *drive* men ; this was an attempt to *draw* them.

It was Hamilton's proposal for the assumption of the state debts that originated the first great division between political parties under the Constitution. It also partly drew the line of division between the Northern and the Southern states. In the debates on the ratification of the Constitution it did not appear that the desire for a more perfect union was any stronger at the North than at the South. Virginia was scarcely more afraid of centralization than Massachusetts, and Rhode Island was even more backward in ratifying than North Carolina. But the assumption

question tended to unite the Northern states in favour of a centralizing policy and the Southern states in opposition to the same. This was because the great majority of the public creditors were to be found among Northern capitalists. Hamilton's policy appealed directly to their selfish interests, but it did not so appeal to the Southern planters. One of the chief reasons for Virginia's hesitancy in accepting the Constitution had been her fear that the commercial North might acquire such a majority in Congress as to enable it to tyrannize over the agricultural South. The Virginians now denounced the assumption policy as unconstitutional, and Hamilton in self-defence was obliged to formulate what is known as the doctrine of "implied powers." He gave a liberal interpretation to that clause in the Constitution (Art I., Sect. viii., p. 18) which authorized Congress "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution" such powers as are explicitly vested in the government of the United States. The opponents of a strong government, on the other hand, insisted upon a strict and narrow interpretation of that clause; and thus arose that profound antagonism between "strict constructionists" and "loose constructionists" which has run through the entire political history of the last hundred years. As a rule the Republican party of Jefferson, with its lineal successor, the Democratic party from Jackson to Cleveland, has advocated strict construction; while loose construction has characterized the Federalist party of Hamilton, with its later representatives, — the National Republican party of Quincy Adams, the Clay and Webster wing of the Whig party, and the Republicans of the present day.

This general rule, however, has been seriously complicated by the fact that the same party is apt to entertain very different views when in power from those which it entertains when in opposition. The tendency of the party in possession of the government is to interpret its powers liberally, while the party in opposition seeks to restrict them. So generally has this been the case in American history that it would be difficult to lay down any theory of the subject which any statesman has consistently applied on all occasions. Hamilton, however, was always a loose constructionist. As we have seen, the Constitution was never nearly centralizing enough to suit him, and the more powers that could be given to the general government, the better he was satisfied.

The division between North and South on the assumption policy was not complete, for here, as on most questions previous to 1820, South Carolina was on the Federalist side. In this particular instance her interests were like those of some of the Northern states, for she had a heavy war debt, of which the proposed measure would relieve her. Even with this assistance, however, the bitter fight over assumption would have ended in defeat for Hamilton, had not another fight then raging afforded an opportunity for compromise. A new city was about to be designed and reared as the Federal capital of the United States, and the question was where should it be situated. The Northern members of Congress were determined that it should not be farther south than the Delaware River; the Southern members were equally resolved that it should not be farther north than the Potomac; the result was the first, and in some respects the

greatest, instance of "log-rolling" known to American history. The Northern advocates of assumption carried their point by yielding to the Southerners in the matter of the capital. Congress assumed over \$20,000,000 of state debts, and the city of Washington was built upon the bank of the Potomac.

This was a great victory for Hamilton, for the Federalist party, and for the United States as a nation. It certainly required a pretty liberal interpretation of the Constitution to justify Congress in assuming these debts, but if it had not been done it is very doubtful if the Union could long have been held together. We must always be grateful to Hamilton for his daring and sagacious policy, yet at the same time we must acknowledge that the opposition was animated by a sound and wholesome feeling. Every day showed more clearly that Hamilton's aim was to insure the stability of the government through a firm alliance with capitalists, and the fear was natural that such a policy, if not held in check, might end in transforming the government into a plutocracy,—that is to say, a government in which political power is monopolized by rich men, and employed in furthering their selfish interests without regard to the general welfare of the people. Those who expressed such a fear were more prescient than their Federalist adversaries believed them to be; for now after the lapse of a hundred years the gravest danger that threatens us is precisely such a plutocracy! It has been one of our national misfortunes that for three-quarters of a century the mere maintenance of the Union seemed to call for theories which when put into operation are very far from making a government that is in the fullest sense "of the

people, by the people, and for the people." The only party that ever extricated itself from the dilemma, and stood at one and the same time unflinchingly for the Union and against paternal government in every form, was the party of Jackson and Van Buren between 1830 and 1845. But with Hamilton paternal government was desirable, not only as a means of strengthening the Union, but as an end in itself. He believed that a part of the people ought to make laws for the whole.

Having now provided for the complete assumption of all debts, domestic and foreign, state and federal, by the United States, the next question was how to raise the money for discharging them. The new government was regarded with distrust by many people. It was feared that the burden of federal taxation would be intolerable. Men already found it hard to pay taxes to their town, their county, and their state; how could they endure the addition of a fourth tax to the list? There was but one way to deal with this difficulty. Probably a general system of direct taxation would not have been endured. It was accordingly necessary to depend almost entirely upon custom-house duties. This gentle, insidious method enables vast sums to be taken from people's pockets without their so much as suspecting it. It raises prices, that is all; and the dulness of the human mind may be safely counted upon, so that when a tax is wrapped up in the extra fifty cents charged for a yard of cloth, it is so effectually hidden that most people do not know it is there. Custom-house duties were accordingly levied, and the foreign trade of the United States was already so considerable that a large revenue was at once realized from this source. To win added favour to this

policy Hamilton advocated a tariff for what is called protection as well as for revenue, although his argument fell very short of meeting the exorbitant requirements of the pampered industries of our own time. Here, as in his assumption policy, it was Hamilton's aim to ally the government with powerful class interests. He saw the vast natural resources of the country for manufactures, he knew that flourishing industries must presently spring up, and he understood how to enlist their selfish interests in defence of a liberal construction of the powers of government. A remarkable instance of his foresight was exhibited some years afterward in the case of Daniel Webster, who, although in principle an advocate of free trade, nevertheless succumbed to the protectionists and allied himself with them, in order to save the principle of loose construction and thus leave the general government with powers adequate to the paramount purpose of preserving the Union.

The necessity of relying chiefly upon custom-house duties was strikingly illustrated by the reception given in one part of the country to a direct federal tax. Upon distilled liquors Hamilton thought it right to lay a direct excise; but it was with some difficulty that he succeeded in getting the measure through Congress, and it was no sooner enacted than riotous protests began to come from the mountain districts of North Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. The highest tax laid on whiskey was only twenty-five cents per gallon, but it led to such serious disturbances in western Pennsylvania that in the summer of 1794 President Washington raised an army of 15,000 men to deal with them. It was the design of the malcon-

tents to capture the federal garrison at Pittsburg, and then to secede from the Union, together with the western counties of Virginia and North Carolina, and form an independent state of which the corner-stone should be free whiskey. But Washington's action was so prompt and his force so overwhelming that the rebellion suddenly collapsed without bloodshed. Thus the strength of the government was most happily asserted and Hamilton's financial policy sustained in all particulars.

{The completion of Hamilton's general scheme was the establishment of a national bank, in which the government was to own a certain portion of the stock, and which was to make certain stated loans to the government. This was another feature of the alliance between the government and the moneyed classes. Like the other kindred measures, it was attacked as unconstitutional, and as in the other cases the objection was met by asserting the loose constructionist theory of the Constitution. Hamilton's financial policy was thus in the widest sense a political policy. In these methods of obtaining revenue and regulating commerce were laid the foundations of the whole theory of government upon which our federal Union was built up. Their immediate effect in reviving the national credit was marvellous. They met with most hearty support in the Northern states, while in the purely agricultural state of Virginia they were regarded with distrust, and under the leadership of Jefferson and Madison there was developed a powerful opposition which was soon to prove wholesome as a restraint upon the excesses into which pure federalism was betrayed.



It was the French Revolution and the consequent war between France and Great Britain that so reacted upon American politics as to bring about the downfall of the Federalist party and hurry to an untimely end the career of its illustrious founder. During the last decade of the eighteenth century the whole civilized world seemed bitten with the fierce malady that was raging in France. *Semel insanivimus omnes*. In America the excitement soon reached such a point as to subordinate all questions of domestic policy; and Hamilton's opponents, foiled in their attempts to defeat his financial measures, were not unwilling to shift the scene of battle to the questions connected with our foreign relations. It was the aim of the French revolutionary party to drag the United States into war with Great Britain, but the only sound policy for the Americans was that of strict neutrality. The insolence of the British court made this a very difficult course to pursue, and probably it would have been impossible had not the French in their demands upon us shown equal insolence. The pendulum of popular feeling in America, under the stimulus of alternate insults from London and from Paris, vibrated to and fro. The Federalists, as friends of strong government, saw in the French convulsions nothing but the orgies of a crazy mob; while on the other hand the Republicans had a keener appreciation of the vileness of the despotism that was being swept away and the wholesome nature of the reforms that were being effected amid all the horrors and bloodshed. Under the influence of such feelings the antagonism between Hamilton and Jefferson grew into a bitter personal feud, and the quarrels in the cabinet were so fierce that Wash-

ington once exclaimed he would rather be in his grave than sit and listen to them. Never, perhaps, did Washington's strength of character seem more colossal than in the steadiness with which he pursued his course amid that wild confusion.

The first outburst of popular wrath was against Great Britain on the occasion of the Jay treaty in 1794. The treaty was called a base surrender to the British, and Hamilton was stoned while attempting to defend it in a public meeting in New York. Washington's personal authority, more than anything else, carried the treaty and averted war with Great Britain. At that moment the Republican opposition was at its height, and scurrilous newspapers heaped anathemas upon Washington, calling him the "stepfather of his country." But as the Jay treaty enraged the French and made them more abusive than ever, the zeal of the Republican sympathizers began to cool rapidly. When in 1798 it appeared that Prince Talleyrand was trying to extort blackmail from the United States, popular wrath in America was turned against France, the war cry was raised, "Millions for defence, not one cent for tribute," the Republicans were struck dumb, and the Federalists seemed to be riding on the top of the tide. In a moment of over-confidence the latter now ventured upon a step which soon led to their downfall. In their eagerness to keep out intriguing foreigners and curb the license of the newspapers, they carried through Congress the famous alien and sedition laws. Through Hamilton's influence these acts were somewhat softened in passing, but as passed they were palpably in violation of the Constitution, and infringed so outrageously upon freedom of speech and of the

press as to seem to justify all that had been said by Republicans as to the dangerous aims and tendencies of the Federalist party.

During the two years preceding the election of 1800 the Federalists steadily lost ground, and the very war fever which had for a moment so powerfully aided them now gave rise to dissensions within their own ranks. Between Hamilton and John Adams there had been for some time a feeling of jealousy and distrust, not based upon any serious difference of policy, but simply upon the fact that one party was not large enough to hold two men of such aggressive and masterful temperament. As is apt to be the case with mere personal differences, in which no question of principle is involved, it was marked by pettiness and silliness on both sides. As in those days the electoral tickets did not distinguish between the candidates for the presidency and the vice-presidency, it was possible to have such a thing as a tie between the two candidates of the same party; it was even possible that through some accident or trick the person intended by the party for the second place might get more electoral votes than his companion and thus be elected over him. In 1796 the Federalist candidates were John Adams and Thomas Pinckney, and the advice given privately by Hamilton to his friends was such as would, if not thwarted, have made Pinckney President and Adams Vice-president. Hamilton's conduct on this occasion was certainly wanting in frankness, and when Adams discovered it he naturally felt ill used. The relations between the two were made more uncomfortable by the fact that Hamilton, although now in private life, seemed to have more influence with Adams's cabinet

than Adams himself. In 1798 the President saw a chance to retaliate. A provisional army was to be raised in view of the expected war with France, and Washington accepted the chief command on condition that he might choose his principal officers. With this understanding he named as his three major-generals Hamilton, Cotesworth Pinckney, and Knox. President Adams tried to reverse this order, on the ground that in the revolutionary army Knox's rank was higher than Hamilton's. A quarrel ensued which involved the whole Federalist party, and was ended only when Washington declared that unless his wishes were respected he should resign. Before such a stroke as this even Adams's obstinacy must give way, and he was placed in the humiliating attitude of a man who has not only tried to do a mean thing, but has failed.

If John Adams, however, could be weak, he could also be very strong, and his course during the year 1799 was nothing less than heroic. France was so far affected by the warlike preparations of the United States as to begin taking informal steps toward a reconciliation, and Adams, who knew that war ought if possible to be avoided, resolved to meet her half-way. In spite of the protests of leading Federalists, including part of his own cabinet, he sent envoys to France, who in the following year succeeded in making a treaty with Napoleon as First Consul. In taking this step Adams knew that he was breaking up his own party on the eve of a presidential election; he knew that he was thus in all probability ruining his own chances for that second term which he desired most intensely; but he acted with a single eye to the

welfare of the country, and in all American history it would be hard to point to a nobler act.

The ensuing year, 1800, was one of dire political confusion. In the spring election in New York Hamilton contended unsuccessfully against the wiles of Aaron Burr; a Republican legislature was chosen, and in the autumn this legislature would of course choose Republican electors for President. Political passion now so far prevailed with Hamilton as to lead him to propose to Governor Jay to call an extra session of the old legislature and give the choice of presidential electors to districts. This would divide the presidential vote of New York and really defeat the will of the people as just expressed. Jay refused to lend himself to such a scheme. That Hamilton should ever have entertained it shows how far he was blinded by the dread of what might follow if Jefferson and the Republicans should get control of the national government.

Yet in spite of this dread he took the very rash step of writing a pamphlet attacking Adams, and advising Federalists to vote for him only as a less dangerous candidate than Jefferson. This pamphlet was intended only for private circulation, but Burr contrived to get hold of it, and its publication helped the Republicans.

Even with all this dissension among their antagonists, the Republican victory of 1800 was a narrow one. Adams obtained sixty-five electoral votes. The Republican candidates, Jefferson and Burr, each obtained seventy-three, and it was left for the House of Representatives to decide which of the two should be President. Nobody had the slightest doubt that the choice of the party was Jefferson, and that Burr was

intended to be Vice-president, but the situation offered an opportunity for intrigue. Many leading Federalists were so bent upon defeating their arch-enemy, Jefferson, that they were ready to aid in raising Burr above him. But political passion could not so far confuse Hamilton's sense of right and wrong as to lead him to inflict such a calamity upon the country. His great influence prevented the wicked and dangerous scheme on the part of the Federalists, and Jefferson became President.

In a most tragic and painful way the shadow of the duel was now thrown across Hamilton's career. His eldest son, Philip, aged eighteen, a noble and high-spirited boy, of most brilliant promise, had just been graduated at Columbia. In the summer of 1801 this young man was bitterly incensed at some foul aspersions on his father which were let fall in a public speech by a political enemy. Meeting this unscrupulous speaker some few evenings afterward in a box at the theatre, high words ensued, and a challenge was given. The duel took place on the ledge below Weehawken Heights, which was then the customary place for such affairs. Young Hamilton fell mortally wounded at the first fire, and was carried home to die. As one reads of the agonized father, on hearing the first alarming tidings, running to summon the doctor and fainting on the way, it comes home to one's heart to-day with a sense of personal affliction. The student of history becomes inured to scenes of woe, but it is hard to be reconciled to such things as the shocking death of this noble boy.

It was to be the father's turn next. The unprincipled intrigues of Burr with the Federalists had ruined his chances of advancement in the Republican party.

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His only hope seemed to lie in further intrigues with the Federalists. The wonderful success of Jefferson's administration was winning fresh supporters daily from the opposite ranks, and the Federalist minority was fast becoming factious and unscrupulous. It was believed by some that Timothy Pickering and others in New England were meditating secession from the Union and the establishment of a Northern confederacy, to which New York, and perhaps New Jersey and Pennsylvania, might be added. Burr was a vain and shallow dreamer. As governor of New York he might rise to be president of a Northern confederacy. At any rate it was worth while to be governor of New York, and Burr, while still Vice-president of the United States, became a candidate for that position in 1804. Hamilton had earned the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen by thwarting Burr's schemes in 1801. He now thwarted them again. Burr failed of election and vowed revenge. His political prospects were already well-nigh ruined; to a wretch like him there was some satisfaction in killing the man who had stood in his way. The affair was cool and deliberate. He practised firing at a target, while in a crafty correspondence he wound his vile meshes around his enemy, and at length confronted him with a challenge. Hamilton seems to have accepted it because he felt that circumstances might still call for him to play a leading part in national affairs, and that to decline a challenge might impair his usefulness. The meeting took place on the 11th of July, 1804, at that ill-fated spot under Weehawken Heights. Hamilton fell at the first fire, and was carried home, to die the next day. The excitement in New York was intense. Vast

crowds surrounded the bulletins which told of the ebbing of his life, and their sobs and tears were mingled with fierce oaths and threats against the slayer. As the news slowly spread through the country, the tongue of political enmity was silenced, and the mourning was like that called forth in after years by the murder of Abraham Lincoln. It has been thought that the deep and lasting impression produced by this affair had much to do with the discredit into which the practice of duelling speedily fell throughout the Northern states.

When Alexander Hamilton's life was thus cut short, he was only in his eight-and-fortieth year. Could he have attained such a great age as his rival, John Adams, he might have witnessed the Mexican War and the Wilmot Proviso. Without reaching extreme old age he might have listened to Webster's reply to Hayne, and felt his heart warm at Jackson's autocratic and decisive announcement that the federal Union must be preserved. One may wonder what his political course would have been had he lived longer; but it seems clear that he would soon have parted company with the Federalists. He had already taken the initial step in breaking with them by approving Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana. The narrow sectional policy of Pickering and the New England Federalists was already distasteful to him. As the Republican party became more and more national, he would have found himself inclining toward it as John Adams did, and perhaps might even have come, like Adams in later years, to recognize the merits and virtues of the great man whose name had once seemed to him to typify anarchy and misrule, —



Thomas Jefferson. Such mellowing influence does wide and long experience of life sometimes have, when one can witness great changes in the situation of affairs, that we may be sure it would not have been without its effect upon Alexander Hamilton. When the new division of parties came, after 1825, there can hardly be a doubt that he would have found his place by the side of Webster and John Quincy Adams.

At the time of his death he was inclined to gloomy views of the political future, for he lacked that serene and patient faith in the slow progressiveness of average humanity which was the strong point in Jefferson. His disposition was to force the human plant and to trim and prune it, and when he saw other methods winning favour, it made him despondent. He was in his last days thinking of abandoning practical politics and writing a laborious scientific treatise on the history and philosophy of civil government. Such a book from the principal author of the "Federalist" could hardly have failed to be a great and useful book, whatever theories it might have propounded. But since we have it not, we may well be content with the "Federalist" itself, a literary monument great enough for any man and any nation. And as for Hamilton, his quick insight, his boldness of initiative, and his rare constructive genius have stamped his personality so deeply upon American history that, in spite of his untimely death, his career has for this and for future generations all the interest that belongs to a complete and well-rounded tale.

IV

**THOMAS JEFFERSON**  
**THE CONSERVATIVE REFORMER**



## IV

### THOMAS JEFFERSON

#### THE CONSERVATIVE REFORMER

IN the development of English civilization on its political side there have been few agencies more potent than those represented by the independent yeomanry and the country squire. In the history of such a country as France, until very recent times, the small rural freeholder scarcely plays a part. There under the old régime we see the powerful nobleman in his grim château, surrounded by villages of peasantry holding their property by a servile tenure. The nobleman is exempt from taxation, his children are all nobles and share in this exemption, so that they constitute a class quite distinct from the common people and having but little sympathy with them. The only middle class is to be found in the large walled towns, whose burghers have acquired from the sovereign sundry privileges and immunities in exchange, perhaps, for money furnished to aid him in putting down rebellious vassals. Representative assemblies are weak and their means of curbing the crown very limited, so that early in the seventeenth century they fall into disuse; and as the crown gradually conquers its vassals and annexes their domains, the result is at length an extremely centralized and oppressive despotism in which the upper classes are supported in

luxurious idleness by taxes wrung from a groaning peasantry. The state of things becomes so bad that a radical reform is possible only at the cost of a frightful paroxysm of anarchy; and the traditions of personal independence are so completely lost that a century of earnest struggle has not yet sufficed to regain them. As a little American girl observed the other day, as the net result of her first impressions of Paris, "Every man here has to have some other man to see that he does what he ought to do."

Now in the history of England perhaps the most striking of all the many points of contrast with French history consists in the position of the rural landholder. The greatest proprietor in the country, though almost sure to be a peer, does not belong to a different class from the common people: his children are not peers, and only one of them is likely to become so, except perhaps for personal merit. There is no more promising career for the younger son than is offered by a chance to represent the voters of his county in the House of Commons, and thus there has never been a sharp division between classes, as there used to be in France. Noble families have always paid their full share of the taxes. The small tenants have in many cases been freeholders, and since the fourteenth century the higher kinds of servile tenures, such as copyhold, have practically ceased to be servile. The higher grades of copyholders and the smaller freeholders constitute that class of yeomanry that has counted for so much in history. Of old these small freeholders were often known as "franklins," and one of their American descendants, winning an immortal name, has illustrated the many virtues, the boldness and thrift, the upright-

ness and canny tact, which has made them such a power in the world. Of somewhat higher dignity than the mere freeholder was the "lord of the manor," or country squire with tenants under him. He might be the son of a peer, or he might be a yeoman who had risen in life. This rural middle-class had many points of contact on the one hand with the nobility and on the other hand with the burghers of the large towns. They were all used from time immemorial to carrying on public business and settling questions of general interest by means of local representative assemblies. There was far less antagonism between town and country than on the Continent, and when it became necessary to curb the sovereign it was comparatively easy for the middle class in town and country to join hands with part of the nobility for that purpose.

We can thus understand why the earl and his castle have not furnished popular tradition with the themes of such blood-curdling legends as have surrounded the count and his château. The old English yeoman, with his yew-tree bow and clothyard shaft, was the most independent of mortals, and nothing could exceed his pitying contempt of the whole array of armoured knights and starveling peasantry that he scattered in headlong flight at Poitiers and Navarrete. His lord of the manor was not so much the taskmaster of his tenants as their leader and representative. A sturdy and thrifty race were these old English squires. To-day perhaps it was to call out their archers and march against the invading Scot; to-morrow it was to sit in Parliament with hats drawn over their knitted brows and put into dutiful but ominous phrases some stern demand for a redress of wrongs. Age after age of such

discipline made them capable managers of affairs, keenly alive to the bearings of political questions, and fierce sticklers for local rights. There never existed a class of men better fitted for laying the foundations of a nation in which a broad and liberal democracy should be found compatible with ingrained respect for parliamentary methods and constitutional checks.

Now it was this middle class of squires and yeomanry that furnished the best part of colonial society in Virginia, as it furnished pretty much the whole of colonial society in New England. An urban middle class of merchants and artisans came in greater numbers to New England than to Virginia, and the Southern colony, besides its negroes, received a very low class of population in the indented white servants, who seem to have been the progenitors of the modern "white trash." But the characteristic society — that which has made the histories of New England and of Virginia what they are — had the same origin in both cases. There was also in both cases a principle of selection at work, although not so early in Virginia as in New England. As the latter country was chiefly settled between 1629 and 1640, the years when Charles I. was reigning without a Parliament, so the former received the most valuable portion of its settlers during the Commonwealth, when the son of that unfortunate monarch was off upon his travels. Men who leave their country for conscience' sake are apt to be picked men for ability and character, no matter what side they may have espoused. Our politics may be those of Samuel Adams, but we must admit that the Hutchinson type of character is a valuable one to have in the community. Of the gallant cavaliers who fought

for King Charles there were many who no more approved of his crooked methods and despotic aims than Hutchinson approved of the Stamp Act. A proper combination of circumstances was all that was required to bring their children into active alliance with the children of the Puritans. Most of the great leaders that Virginia gave to the American Revolution were descended from men who had drawn sword against Oliver Cromwell; and a powerful set of men they were. Virginia has always known how to produce great leaders. The short-lived Southern Confederacy would have been much shorter lived but for Lee, Johnston, and Jackson; and the cause of the Union would have fared much harder but for the invincible Thomas.

Colonial life in Virginia departed less than in New England from the contemporary type of rural life in the mother country. Agriculture in New England thrived best with small farms cultivated by their owners, and this developed the type of yeomanry, while the ecclesiastical organization tended to concentrate the population into self-governing village communities. Agriculture in Virginia seemed to thrive best with great estates cultivated by gangs of labourers, and this prevented the growth of villages. The Virginia planter occupied a position somewhat like that of the English country squire. He had extensive estates to superintend and county interests to look after. He was surrounded by dependents, mostly slaves indeed, and in this aspect the divergence from English custom was great and injurious; still Virginia slavery was of a mild type. In his House of Burgesses the planter had a parliament, and in the royal governor, representing a distant sovereign, there was a source of antago-



nism and distrust requiring him to keep his faculties perpetually alert, and to remember all the legal maxims by which the liberties of Englishmen had been defended since the days of Bracton and Fortescue.

It was into this community that Thomas Jefferson was born on the 13th of April, 1743. His first American ancestor on the father's side had come to Virginia among the very earliest settlers, and was a member of the assembly of 1619, the first legislative body of Englishmen that ever met on this side of the ocean. The Jeffersons belonged to the class of yeomanry. Thomas's father was a man of colossal stature and strength, which the son inherited. Like Washington, he was a land surveyor and familiar with the ways of Indians. His farm, on which wheat was cultivated as well as tobacco, by about thirty slaves, was situated on what was then the western frontier, near the junction of the Rivanna River with the James. He was a justice of the peace, colonel of the county militia, and for some time member of the House of Burgesses. He died suddenly in 1757, perhaps from exposure in the arduous frontier campaigning of that year.

Thomas's mother was Jane Randolph, daughter of one of the most patrician families in Virginia. From her he is said to have inherited his extreme tenderness of nature and aversion to strife, as well as his love of music. From his father he derived a strong taste for mathematics and the constructive arts, a punctilious accuracy in all matters of business, a hatred of ceremony, and a dislike to have other people wait upon him. Thomas, when full grown, was six feet and two inches in height, lithe and sinewy, erect and alert, with reddish hair and bright hazel eyes. His features were

by no means handsome, but the expression of his face was attractive. As a daring horseman, a dead shot with a rifle, and a skilful player of the violin, he was remarkable even among Virginians. Until he entered William and Mary College, at the age of seventeen, he had never seen a village of as many as twenty houses; but since his ninth year he had pored over Latin and Greek, and a box of mathematical instruments and a table of logarithms were his constant companions. In college he worked with furious energy, and besides his classical and scientific studies he kept up an extensive reading in English, French, and Italian. He used to keep a clock in his bedroom, and get up and go to work as soon as it was light enough to see what time it was. After leaving college he studied law under one of the best of teachers, George Wythe, and in two of the best of text-books, Bracton and Coke. He had a keen appreciation of the Toryism of Blackstone, and some suspicion of the mistaken standpoint from which that charming writer viewed the development of the English constitution, as has been shown in our day, with such wealth of learning, by Freeman and Stubbs. He also gave much attention to Montesquieu and Locke, and the Parliamentary debates. In 1767 he began the practice of law, and in 1769 was elected to the House of Burgesses. In 1772 he was married to the blooming widow of Bathurst Skelton. His first notable political act was in 1774, on the occasion of the convention held in August for choosing delegates to the first Continental Congress. Being prevented by illness from attending the convention, he drew up a series of instructions such as he hoped the convention would

give to the delegates. This paper, when read in the convention, was so much liked that it was printed as a pamphlet under the title of "A Summary View of the Rights of British America." In this paper Jefferson set forth a doctrine which was very popular with the Americans at that time, and deservedly so, because it gave expression to the view of their relations with Great Britain upon which they had always implicitly acted. Jefferson held that "the relation between Great Britain and the colonies was exactly the same as that of England and Scotland" between 1603 and 1607, "and the same as her present relations with Hanover, having the same executive chief, but no other necessary connection." The Americans acknowledged the headship of the king, but not the authority of Parliament, and when that body undertook to legislate for Americans, it was simply a case of "one free and independent legislature" presuming "to suspend the powers of another, as free and independent as itself." James Otis had said things not unlike this a dozen years before, when he argued that the supremacy of the colonial assembly in Massachusetts was as indisputable and as sacred as that of the Parliament in Great Britain; and similar arguments had been used by Samuel Adams and others. But Jefferson's terse way of stating the case had a decided savour of revolution about it. His pamphlet went through ever so many editions in England; its arguments were incorporated into the resolutions adopted by the Continental Congress; and in the following spring Jefferson was himself elected a delegate to that great Revolutionary body. He was then thirty-two years old, and the only delegates younger than himself were John

Jay, aged thirty, and Edward Rutledge, aged twenty-six. Four days before he took his seat the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, and when the news reached Philadelphia he was appointed on a committee with Dickinson and others for drawing up a manifesto justifying to the world the course of the Americans. The manifesto as published contained only a few words of his, but among them were the following: "We mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. Necessity has not *yet* driven us into that desperate measure." Wonderfully eloquent was that little word "*yet*"! The threat of all that was to happen next year was latent in it. The current of feeling was moving rapidly just then. Two months later Jefferson wrote: "There is not in the British empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But by the God that made me I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament proposes; and in this I think I speak the sentiments of America." Observe the historical accuracy of this wording. It was not a question of throwing off a yoke, but of refusing to yield to a connection on newfangled and degrading terms. The American colonies had never been under a yoke, but they had maintained a connection with Great Britain in which their legislative independence had until within the last ten years been virtually recognized. Now they were asked to surrender that legislative independence and come under the yoke of the British Parliament, and this, said Jefferson, they would never consent to do. The American Revolution was essentially conservative. It

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was fought not so much to gain new liberties as to preserve old ones. It was the British in this case that were the innovators, and the Americans that were the conservatives. This is the true historical light in which to study our Revolution, and so this large-minded young student of Bracton and Coke understood it. Because in later years Jefferson came to be the head of a party which sympathized with revolutionary France, there has come into existence a legendary view of him as a sort of French doctrinaire politician and disciple of Rousseau. Nothing could be more grotesquely absurd. Jefferson was broad enough to learn lessons from France, but he was no Frenchman in his politics; and we shall not understand him until we see in him simply the earnest but cool-headed representative of the rural English freeholders that won Magna Charta and overthrew the usurpations of the Stuarts.

It was chiefly in drawing up state papers that Jefferson excelled in Congress, and herein he played a part for the whole country like that which Samuel Adams had played in the legislature of Massachusetts in the earlier scenes of the Revolution. As an orator Jefferson never figured at all. With all his remarkable strength and vigour his voice was weak and husky, so that he found it hard to speak in public. He had besides a nervous shrinking from hearing himself talk on the spur of the moment about things which he knew he could so much better deal with sitting at his desk. And then he was utterly wanting in combativeness. However he might evoke contention by his writings, its actual presence was something from which his deliberate, introspective, and delicately poised

nature shrank. He was in no wise lacking in moral courage, but his sympathies were so broad and tender that he could not breathe freely in an atmosphere of strife.


For such a nature the pen, rather than the tongue, is the ready instrument. As a wielder of that weapon which is mightier than the sword Jefferson was now to win such a place as would have made him immortal, even had he done no more. In June, 1776, as Richard Henry Lee, who had moved the Declaration of Independence, was called home to Virginia by the illness of his wife, Jefferson was appointed chairman of the committee for drawing up the declaration. The draft as made by him, with two or three slight changes interlined by Franklin and John Adams, was substantially adopted by Congress. There were no interpolations worth mentioning, but there were a few omissions, and the most important of these was the passage which denounced George III. for upholding the slave-trade. The antislavery party in Virginia was quite strong at that time. In 1769 the legislature had enacted a law prohibiting the further importation of negroes to be sold into slavery, but at the king's command the governor had vetoed this wholesome act. Jefferson made this the occasion of a denunciation of slavery and the slave-trade, but inasmuch as New England shipmasters combined with South Carolina planters in carrying on this "execrable commerce," Congress remembered that people who live in glass houses should not begin to throw stones, and the clause was struck out.

Some expressions in the Declaration of Independence are often quoted in illustration of Jefferson's Gallicism. It begins with a series of generaliza-

tions: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," etc. In these sentences we may plainly see the result of French teaching. It would be very difficult to find in the files of the House of Commons any such abstract announcements of "self-evident truths." The traditional English squire would appeal, not to speculation, but to precedent. He would defend his rights, not as the natural rights of men, but as the chartered and prescriptive rights of Englishmen. This was because the English squire had a goodly body of prescriptive rights which were worth defending, but the French peasant, who had nothing but prescriptive wrongs, was obliged to fall back upon the natural rights of man. In attempting to generalize about liberty and government, the French philosophers of that day soon got beyond their depth, as was to have been expected. Such problems cannot be solved by abstract reason, but the attempt to rest the doctrines of civil liberty upon a broad theoretical basis was praiseworthy. Jefferson was always a philosopher as well as a statesman, and he was quite capable of learning from Voltaire and Montesquieu, Rousseau and Diderot, who were then the most suggestive and stimulating writers in the world. It pleased him to give a neat little philosophical turn to the beginning of his great document, but after this exordium he goes on to the end in the practical tone of the English squire. The king

is arraigned at the bar of public opinion as a violator of chartered rights, a sovereign who by breaking the law has forfeited the allegiance of his American subjects. There is something very happy in the skill with which any explicit mention of Parliament is avoided. "He has combined with OTHERS to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws ; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation," etc. It is only in this way that allusion was made to Parliament, and it would have been impossible to state with more consummate skill the American view of the position based upon solid American precedent. In every clause is wrapped up a genuine historic pearl. There is not one that appears as an inference from the philosophic preamble, which indeed might have been omitted without altering the practical effect of the document. Nothing could more clearly show what a skin-deep affair Jefferson's Gallicism really was.

In the summer of 1776 Jefferson was reëlected to the Continental Congress, but declined to serve. It was with him as with many other public men at that time. Important changes were going on in the several state constitutions, which made the services of the ablest men needed at home. In Virginia there was a great work to be done, and Jefferson went into it with wonderful vigour, ably assisted by his old teacher, George Wythe, and by Colonel George Mason and the youthful James Madison. It was on the 7th of October, 1776, that Jefferson again took his seat in the Virginia legislature. One week from that day he reported a bill abolishing the whole system of entail. That ancient abuse was deeply rooted in the affections of





many of the old families, but popular feeling must have been strongly aroused against it, for Jefferson's bill was passed within three weeks. All entailed estates at once became estates in fee simple, and could be bought and sold or attached for debt like other property. It was a sweeping reform and won for Jefferson the vindictive hatred of many of the aristocrats, some of whom were cruel enough to point to the death of his only son as a divine judgment which he had brought down upon himself by his impious disregard of the sacred rights of family. But the reformer did not stop here. He next assailed primogeniture, and presently overthrew it. At the same time, as chairman of a committee for revising the laws, he showed, in one important respect, a wise conservatism. Against the advice of his able colleague, Edmund Pendleton, he insisted upon retaining the letter of the old laws wherever possible, because the precise meaning of every phrase had been determined by decisions of the courts, and to introduce new terminology is always to open a fresh source of litigation. With all this caution he did very much toward simplifying the code. Here again we see, not the *a priori* French iconoclast, but the practical and liberal English squire. Other reforms, proposed by Jefferson and ultimately carried out, were the limitation of the death penalty to the two crimes of murder and treason, and the abolition of imprisonment for debt. He tried to introduce public schools like those of New England, and to have a public library established in Richmond; but the state of society in Virginia was not sufficiently advanced in this direction to support him. He was an earnest advocate of the abolition of slavery, but he

realized that there was no hope of carrying through the legislature any measures to that end. He did, however, in 1778 bring in a bill prohibiting the further importation of slaves into Virginia, and carried it without serious opposition.

The relations between Church and State also claimed his attention. The Episcopal Church was then established by law in Virginia, and dissenters were taxed to support it. Besides there were many heavy penalties attached to nonconformity; a man convicted of heresy might be deprived of the custody of his children. Jefferson's own views of the relations between government and religion are expressed in the following remarkable passage from his "Notes on Virginia." Opinion, he says, is something with which government has no business to meddle; it is quite beyond its legitimate province. "It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. . . . It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion, and whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men, governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? Difference of opinion is advantageous to religion. The several sects perform the office of *censor morum* over each other. Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. Let us reflect that the earth is inhabited by thousands of millions of people; that these profess probably a thousand different sys-

tems of religion; that ours is but one of that thousand; that if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the nine hundred and ninety-nine wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; and how can we wish others to indulge it, while we refuse it ourselves?" These few pithy sentences have had no little influence upon American history. For half a century they furnished the arguments for the liberal-minded men who, by dint of persistent effort, succeeded in finally divorcing Church from State in all parts of our Union. For holding such views Jefferson was regarded by many people as an infidel; in our time he would be more likely to be classed as a liberal Christian. The general sentiment of the churches has made remarkable progress toward his position, though it would be too much to say that it has yet fully reached it. In most matters Jefferson's face was set toward the future; in this he was clearly in advance of his age, and it was a notable instance of his power over men that after only nine years of strenuous debate his views should have become incorporated in the legislation of Virginia. In winning the victory he was greatly aided by the disfavour into which the Established Church had fallen in that state because of the lowered character of its clergy, and the extreme Toryism of their politics. The credit for the victory, moreover, must be divided between Jefferson and Madison, whose assistance, always very valuable, was here especially powerful.

In these years Jefferson's industry was prodigious.

His work on legislative committees was enough to tax the stoutest nerves, yet he found time for his gardening and his scientific studies, and thanked the Lord for the thoroughness of the early training which enabled him to solace himself in the intervals of hard work by reading Homer in the original. Such strong natures find relaxation and rest in what to ordinary mortals is painful drudgery. His Greek and his mathematics were a relief to him, and of course he worked all the better for them, as well as for his farming and his hunting and his violin. His tastes were all wholesome, pure, and refining; his motives were disinterested and lofty; and under that sweet, placid surface his energy was like a consuming fire. Seldom has a man so stamped his personality upon a community as Jefferson in these few years upon Virginia, and thus indirectly and in manifold ramifications upon the federal nation in which Virginia was for nearly half a century more to be the leading state. The code of Virginia, when he had done with it, might almost have been called the Code Jefferson. Pity that his influence, reënforced by that of Washington and Madison, Wythe and Mason, could not then have removed her from the list of slave states! Every Virginian to-day must confess that that was a pity. But Jefferson did all that it was in human strength to do. To the end of his days he mourned over negro slavery, and saw in it the rock upon which the ship of state might break into pieces and founder. "I tremble for my country," said he, "when I think of the negro and know that God is just." All the agony that creased its furrows upon the brow of Abraham Lincoln was foretold in those solemn words.

The work done by Jefferson in Virginia was to some extent imitated in other states, not only in its general spirit but often in details. One step in his warfare with the old Tory families intrenched about Williamsburg was the removal of the state capital to the village of Richmond, which he accomplished in spite of bitter opposition. For Virginia this turned out to be a wise policy, but it is curious to see how generally it was imitated, apparently through a dread and a jealousy felt by the bucolic democracy toward cities and city people. Thus our modern capitals are not New York, but Albany; not Philadelphia, but Harrisburg; not Milwaukee, but Madison; not St. Louis, but Jefferson City; not New Orleans, but Baton Rouge, and so on through the majority of the states. In like manner, in 1786, the Shays party wished to remove the government of Massachusetts from Boston to some inland village.

Another measure which Jefferson introduced in Virginia, in 1776, and which has been generally imitated, was the provision for admitting foreigners to citizenship after a residence of two years and a declaration of intention to live in the state. This policy, when first introduced, was unquestionably sound, and has contributed powerfully to the rapid growth of the United States in population and in wealth. It has brought, moreover, to a far greater extent than is supposed in much of the current talk upon this subject, an excellent class of immigrants containing the more energetic and adventuresome elements in the middle and lower strata of European society. Circumstances, nevertheless, that could not have been foreseen a century ago have surrounded it with dangers.

Cheapness and ease of travel have gone far toward making our country the dumping-ground for a much worse class of immigrants from all quarters, so that it becomes a serious question whether we can assimilate them and teach them American political ideas with sufficient rapidity. Jefferson's plan of easy naturalization was admirable in 1776, but in our time it stands in need of amendment and restriction.

In 1779 Jefferson was chosen governor of Virginia, but he declined a renomination in 1781, and returned to the legislature. It was while he was governor that Lord Cornwallis invaded the state; the legislature, which for security had assembled at Charlottesville, was broken up in one of Tarleton's raids, and Jefferson barely escaped capture in his own house at Monticello. His political enemies afterward twitted him with running away, but I never heard of any man except Don Diego Garcia, enshrined in the inimitable pages of Cervantes, who undertook to fight single-handed against a whole army. In 1782 Mrs. Jefferson died, after having been for some years in very poor health. For many weeks after this bereavement Jefferson's keen interest in life was quenched. He could do no work, but spent his days in wandering through the woods absorbed in grief. Of his six children, only two daughters lived to grow up, but he had long ago brought home the six orphan children of his brother-in-law, Dabney Carr, and reared them with tenderest care. In his busiest and most anxious times he never failed to devote part of his attention, most conscientiously and methodically, to their education.

In 1783 he was returned to Congress in time to take part in ratifying the treaty of peace. He assisted

Gouverneur Morris in devising our decimal currency, and suggested the dollar as the unit. He handed to Congress the deed of Virginia ceding the Northwestern Territory to the United States; and he drew up the Ordinance of 1784, in which he endeavoured to introduce the principle of prohibiting all extension of slavery into the national domain, the principle upon which the present Republican party was founded just seventy years later. If Jefferson could have established this principle in 1784, it would have altered the whole course of American history. As it is, much credit must be given to his initiative in leading to the result which in the Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery north of the Ohio River. In May, 1784, Jefferson's legislative work, so noble and so fruitful, came to an end. He left Congress and was appointed commissioner to aid Franklin and John Adams in negotiating commercial treaties with European nations. He arrived in Paris in August, 1784. In the following spring the commission was broken up, Adams was appointed minister to Great Britain, Franklin came home, and Jefferson was appointed minister to France. It has been said that "his first diplomatic move was a *bon mot*, and therefore in France a success. 'You replace M. Franklin, I hear,' remarked the Count de Vergennes at an interview. 'I *succeed* him, your Excellency,' he replied promptly; 'no one can *replace* him.'"<sup>1</sup>

The author of the Declaration of Independence was well received in Paris. His book entitled, "Notes on Virginia," published about this time, was widely read and greatly admired. He soon became a kind of oracle for literary men and political theorists to con-

<sup>1</sup> Rosenthal, "America and France," p. 128.

sult. To-day it is M. Dêmeunier who seeks help in preparing his articles on political economy for the "*Encyclopédie Méthodique*." To-morrow it is M. Soulés who is writing in four volumes a history of the American war and comes for advice. Counsel on still more pressing subjects was soon called for. The four years of Jefferson's sojourn in Paris were of surpassing interest, for they ended in the outbreak of the great Revolution. Jefferson's intimacy with Lafayette brought him much into the society of the men with whom he most sympathized, the reasonable and moderate reformers, such as Barnave, Rabant de Saint Étienne, Duport, Mounier, and others, who were often gathered around his hospitable dinner table. When the States General were assembled, he used to go every day to Versailles to watch the proceedings. On the 9th of July, 1789, the British ambassador, the Duke of Dorset, wrote to Mr. Pitt that "Mr. Jefferson, the American minister at this court, has been a great deal consulted by the principal leaders of the Tiers État; and I have great reason to think that it was owing to his advice that that order called itself *L'Assemblée Nationale*." However this may be, there is no doubt that his advice was often sought. The most notable instance was when the Archbishop of Bordeaux, as chairman of a committee of the assembly for sketching the plan of a constitution for France, went so far as to invite him "to attend and assist at their deliberations." But Jefferson did not regard such action as becoming in a foreign minister, and accordingly he declined the invitation. In September, 1789, before the furious phase of the Revolution had begun, he returned to America.




The experience of these four years, aided by the general soundness of his political philosophy, enabled Jefferson to take a much more just view of the French Revolution than was taken by Englishmen of nearly all parties and by the Federalists in America. In its earlier stages the Whigs in England and almost everybody in America viewed the French Revolution with earnest sympathy; but when its fierce excesses came there was a violent reaction. Every one remembers how Burke, in his "Letters on a Regicide Peace," quite lost his head and raved. He could think of no better name for France than "cannibal castle," and wanted the revolutionary party summarily annihilated by an unrelenting policy of blood and iron. Such a reaction of feeling was natural enough. It seized upon the Federalists in America, and led such men as Hamilton to entertain absurd fears of the wild orgies of spoliation likely to ensue upon the victory of democracy in our country. The Federalists' view has survived down to our own time. In talking about the French Revolution people are apt to think only of the guillotine and its innocent victims, the saintlike Princess Elizabeth, the sprightly Madame Roland, Vergniaud, the brilliant orator, Malesherbes, the noble statesman, Lavoisier, the great chemist, André Chenier, the sweet poet, and so many others. In contemplating such sad cases it is too easy to forget the ineffable horrors, the pestilent foulness, of the old régime that was forever swept away, the enlightened and wholesome legislation that began in 1789, and the rapid and powerful inoculation of the peoples of Europe with ideas that have since borne fruit in a restored Hungary, a renovated Germany and Italy,

and increased comfort and happiness everywhere. It is too easy to forget that the atrocities of the Reign of Terror were the result of a temporary destruction of confidence among the members of the community, and that for this destruction of confidence the royalist *émigrés*, in seeking foreign military aid against their own country, were chiefly to blame. There can be no doubt that Jefferson, without approving the excesses of the Jacobins, understood the purport of events in France more correctly and estimated them more fairly than most of his American contemporaries. Of course this gave his political enemies a chance to call him a Jacobin, and has led those people of our own time to whom he is little more than a name to suppose that he obtained his theory of the government from Rousseau!

When Jefferson came home, in the autumn of 1789, it was with the intention of soon returning to France to watch the progress of events; but when he arrived at Monticello, two days before Christmas, he found awaiting him an invitation from President Washington to the position of Secretary of State, and after some hesitation, being strongly urged by Washington and Madison, he accepted it. In March, 1790, he took his place in the cabinet; during the preceding year it had been temporarily occupied by John Jay, whom Washington was about to make chief justice. As the most crying need of the new government was revenue, the work of organization had been carried on mainly by Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury.

It has often been said that Washington, in choosing for the chief places in his cabinet two men so antagonistic to each other as Hamilton and Jefferson, was



actuated by a desire to represent both parties and have a non-partisan government. On all sides Washington has been praised for this breadth of view, although it has sometimes been suggested that it was not characterized by his customary sagacity. It seems to me that this statement is wanting in historical accuracy, as it overlooks the fact that it was during Washington's administration, and not before it, that the definitive divisions between political parties grew up. It is true that Jefferson represented the type of opinions likely to prevail among the agricultural societies of the Southern states, while Hamilton represented the type of opinions likely to prevail among the commercial and manufacturing centres in the Northern states; but it is hardly correct to say that in 1789 these two men belonged to opposite political parties. The earliest division of American parties on a national scale began in the autumn of 1787, when the federal Constitution was submitted to the people of the thirteen states for their approval. Then the friends of the Constitution were known as Federalists, and its enemies were called Anti-federalists. At that time Hamilton and Madison were foremost among the Federalists, while George Clinton and Patrick Henry were the foremost Anti-federalists. Samuel Adams has sometimes been spoken of as an Anti-federalist, but this is utterly and grossly inaccurate. Samuel Adams was slow in coming to a final decision, but when he made up his mind, it was in favour of the Constitution with such amendments as to be equivalent to a bill of rights, — such amendments as the first ten, which were soon afterward annexed to that instrument. When he decided in

this way, his vast influence secured the ratification of the Constitution in Massachusetts by a very narrow majority. But for this attitude of Samuel Adams, Massachusetts would probably have rejected the Constitution, and that would have thrown everything back into chaos. During that momentous year, 1788, Jefferson was in France. What would have been his attitude if he had been at home and taken part in the Virginia convention? Unquestionably it would have been like that of Samuel Adams, for he says as much in his letters. He declared that he was much more a Federalist than an Anti-federalist, and the only faults he had to find with the Constitution were that it did not include a bill of rights, and that it did not provide against the indefinite reëligibility of the President, and thus prevent the presidency from lapsing into something like an elective monarchy. The first of those faults was soon corrected by the first ten amendments, which made a very effective bill of rights; the second was corrected by the precedent set by Washington and confirmed by Jefferson himself, in refusing to serve as President after two terms. It is thus evident that Jefferson, on his return to America, was practically a Federalist, as party lines were at that moment drawn.

But during Washington's administration the Federalists, led by Hamilton, having been given an inch by these state conventions that grudgingly ratified the Constitution, were naturally inclined, in the enthusiasm of their triumph, to claim an ell. The swiftly and radically centralizing measures of Hamilton soon carried the Federalists onward to a new position, so that those who agreed with them in 1789 had come to


dissent from them in 1793. It was thus in Washington's first administration that the seeds of all party differences hereafter to bear fruit in America were sown and sedulously nurtured. All American history has since run along the lines marked out by the antagonism between Jefferson and Hamilton. Our history is sometimes charged with lack of picturesqueness because it does not deal with the belted knight and the moated grange. But to one who considers the moral import of events, it is hard to see how anything can be more picturesque than the spectacle of these two giant antagonists, contending for political measures which were so profoundly to affect the lives of millions of human beings yet unborn. Coleridge once said, with as fair an approximation to truth as is likely to be reached in such sweeping statements, that in philosophy all men must be Aristotelians or Platonists. So it may be said that in American politics all men must be disciples either of Jefferson or of Hamilton. But these two statesmen represented principles that go beyond the limits of American history, principles that have found their application in the history of all countries and will continue to do so. Sometimes a broad comparison helps our understanding of particular cases. Indeed, our understanding of particular cases cannot fail to be helped by a broad comparison, if it is correctly made. Suppose, then, we compare for a moment the general drift of American history with that of British history. We are tolerably familiar with the differences between Liberals and Tories in the mother country. Let us see if we can compare the two great American parties with these, and decide which are the Liberals and which the

Tories; and in doing this, let us divest ourselves for the moment of any prejudices which we may be in the habit of cherishing against either Liberals or Tories.

In England the chief characteristic of the Tory party has been its support of measures which tend to strengthen the crown and the aristocracy, and to enlarge and tighten the control exercised by the community over its individual members. The chief characteristic of the Liberal party has been its support of measures which tend to weaken the crown and the aristocracy, and to diminish and relax the control exercised by the community over its individual members. In all times and countries there has been such a division between parties, and in the nature of things it is the only sound and abiding principle of division. Ephemeral parties rise and fall over special questions of temporary importance, but this grand division endureth forever. Wherever there are communities of men, a certain portion of the community is marked off, in one way or another, to exercise authority over the whole and perform the various functions of government. The question always is how much authority shall this governing portion of the community be allowed to exercise, to how great an extent shall it be permitted to interfere with private affairs, to take people's money in the shape of taxes, whether direct or indirect, and in other ways to curb or restrict the freedom of individuals. All people agree that government must have some such powers, or else human society would be resolved into a chaos in which every man's hand would be raised against every other man. The political question is as to how

much power government shall be permitted to exercise. Where shall the line be drawn beyond which the governing body shall not be allowed to go? This has been the fundamental question among all peoples in all lands, and it is the various answers to this question that have made all the differences in the success or the failure of different phases of civilization, — all the differences between the American citizen and the Asiatic coolie. We might thus take any nation that has ever existed for comparison with the United States, but we choose to take England, because there the will of the people has in all ages been able to assert itself. In countries where the voice of the people has been for a long time silenced, as in France under the old régime and in Russia, we naturally find parties coming up, like the Jacobins and the Anarchists, who would fain destroy all government and send us back to savagery; for in politics as well as in physics it may be said that action and reaction are equal and in opposite directions. But in England, just because the people have always been able to find their voice and use it, things have proceeded normally, in a quiet and slow development, like the unfolding of a flower; and so the differences between parties have never assumed a radically explosive form, but have taken the shape with which we are familiar as the differences between Liberals and Tories.

Now if we compare parties in America with parties in England, unquestionably the Jeffersonians correspond to the Liberals and the Hamiltonians to the Tories. It is, on the whole, the former who wish to restrict, and the latter who wish to enlarge, the powers



of government. But this is an incomplete view of the matter. In England, for the last three centuries, political progress has consisted in limiting more and more the power of the crown and in admitting a larger and larger proportion of the people to a share in the government, and as the Tories have generally resisted these progressive measures, they have come to be somewhat discredited in the eyes of Americans. It is not my purpose, however, to attach any stigma to the followers of Hamilton, to the Federalists of 1800, to the Whigs of 1840, or to the Republicans of 1880, in comparing them to the Tories. Not only has Toryism its uses in all ages of English history, but there was once a time when it was desirable to strengthen the crown, to increase the powers of the central government, and to subordinate the local governments as represented by the great vassals. That was the time when the English nationality was in process of formation, when the chief desideratum was to get a united and orderly England. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was a good thing to have such masterful kings as William the Conqueror, and Henry I., and Henry II. Even so late as the fifteenth century there was a very good side to the overthrow of the old baronage and the tightening of the grip of government under Henry VII. National unity is something that no people can afford to dispense with, for the alternative is chaos.

Now during the past hundred years the American nationality has been in process of formation, and it has been desirable to keep the central government strong enough to preserve the Union. That has, indeed, been the paramount necessity, and therefore



the Hamiltonian theory of strong government has been of great value. We could not have got along without it. But it is a theory that needs to be applied with care and held in check with a curb rein. Otherwise it is sure to end in class legislation and plutocracy, and the reaction shows itself in labour agitation, strikes, and anarchical doctrines among the classes of people that feel themselves in some way deprived of their fair share in the good things of life.

In 1798 the Tory character of Hamiltonian federalism showed itself with crude frankness in the alien and sedition acts. At that time, as an indirect result of the feud between Hamilton and Adams, Jefferson had become Vice-president under a Federalist President. His protest against the abominable alien and sedition acts was uttered in the famous resolutions of Kentucky and Virginia, which seemed to tread dangerously near the confines of nullification. To avoid repetition I shall reserve what I have to say about these resolutions for my lecture on Madison.<sup>1</sup> By 1800 the lines between the party which could enact the alien and sedition laws and the party which could approve the Virginia resolutions had become so sharply drawn that the presidential canvass was as fierce as in 1860, or in 1876, or in 1884. Just as a good many people believed some years ago that the election of Mr. Cleveland meant the assumption of the rebel war debt, the undoing of the work of reconstruction, the instantaneous overthrow of the tariff,

<sup>1</sup> In this affair both the Hamiltonian and the Jeffersonian parties showed their weak sides. Against the excesses of a federalism which had lost its temper, the protest of republicanism was so energetic as to savour, for the moment, of political disintegration.

and all manner of vague horror, so in 1800 the Federalists believed that the election of Mr. Jefferson meant the dissolution of the Union and the importation into America of all the monstrous notions of French Jacobinism. And just as after the election of 1876 some good people were so afraid of what Mr. Tilden might do that they were ready to sanction the shabby trick that kept him out of the place to which he had been chosen, so after the election of 1800 there were worthy people whose ideas of right and wrong became so confused that, rather than see the great and pure statesman, Thomas Jefferson, in the White House, they were ready to surrender the government to the tender mercies of such a scoundrel as Aaron Burr. It is wonderful how men lose their heads at such times. One would suppose that they were electing, not a constitutional magistrate, but, shall we say, a Russian Czar? No, for not even a czar can go far in working changes in government at his own sweet will. They seem rather to argue as if a President were like the king in a fairy tale, with unlimited capacity for evil. New England clergymen entertained a grotesque conception of Jefferson as a French atheist, and I have heard my grandmother tell how old ladies in Connecticut, at the news of his election, hid their family Bibles because it was supposed that his very first official act, perhaps even before announcing his cabinet, would be to issue a *ukase* ordering all copies of the sacred volume throughout the country to be seized and burned.

When people get into such a state of mind the only thing that can cure them is an object lesson. Mr. Cleveland's administration, human and fallible,

but upright and able, has lately furnished us with such an object lesson. In the first eight years of this century the presence of Mr. Jefferson at the head of the government educated the American people in a similar way, but far more potently in that especially plastic and formative time. As a political leader we have hardly seen his equal. He had not the kind of lofty pugnacity which enabled Hutchinson to win victories in the teeth of popular prejudice and clamour, but he had that sympathetic insight into the thoughts and wishes of plain common people which Samuel Adams had, and for the want of which Hutchinson's career, in spite of his great powers and his noble character, was ruined.

A man of such sympathetic insight into the popular mind—a faculty in which Hamilton was almost as lacking as Hutchinson—was just the man that was needed at the head of our government in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Jefferson was needed at the helm in 1800 as much as Hamilton was needed in 1790. He never could have done the work of Hamilton or of Madison. They were men of rare constructive genius; he was not. But when the first work of construction had been done and the government fairly set to work, Jefferson was just the man to carry it along quietly and smoothly until its success passed into a tradition and was thus assured. If he had been the French iconoclast that the Federalists supposed him to be, he could not have achieved any such results. But his career in the presidency, like his earlier career, shows him, not as a Danton, but as a Walpole. Instead of the general overturning which the Federalists had dreaded, the

administration quietly followed the lines which Hamilton had laid down. In other words, it was in the hands of a constitutional magistrate who acquiesced in the decision of such questions by the will of the people. Moreover, as now wielding the administration and feeling the practical merits of Hamilton's measures, Jefferson was no longer so ready to condemn them. In the most important act of his presidency he deserted his strict constructionist theories and ventured upon an exercise of power as bold as Hamilton's assumption of state debts. Napoleon had lately acquired from Spain the vast territory between the Mississippi River and the crest of the Rocky Mountains; on the eve of war with England, he knew that this territory was an extremely vulnerable spot in his empire, and he was very glad to surrender it for hard cash. Accordingly President Jefferson bought it, and thus at a cost of \$15,000,000 more than doubled the area of the United States and gave to our nation its imperial dimensions. The Constitution had not provided for any such startling exercise of power. Probably the federal convention had not so much as thought of such a thing. What is more, this acquisition of territory reopened the question as to slavery, which the framers of the Constitution thought they had closed by their compromises. By and by the question was to arise as to what was to be done about slavery in states formed from the Louisiana territory, — a question to be settled only by civil war and the abolition of slavery altogether. In Jefferson's time no such result was dreamed of. The desirableness of ousting European influence from the mouth of the Mississippi River was very great, and


the purchase was so generally approved that Jefferson abandoned his half-formed purpose of asking Congress to propose a constitutional amendment to justify him. Perhaps it was not needed. A quarter of a century later Chief Justice Marshall laid down the doctrine that "the Constitution conferred absolutely on the government of the Union the power of making war and of making treaties; consequently that government possesses the power of acquiring territory either by conquest or by treaty."<sup>1</sup> In the time of Jefferson's presidency this would have been called loose construction. To the general approval of the Louisiana purchase there was one exception. In New England some people feared that in so huge a nation as this portended, their own corner of the country would be reduced to insignificance. The uneasiness continued until after the second war with England. In 1811 Josiah Quincy, afterward president of Harvard, declared in a fervent speech in the House of Representatives, that if the state of Louisiana, the first beyond the great river, should be admitted into the Union, it would be high time for the New England states to secede and form a separate confederacy.

With Jefferson's strong faith in the teachableness of the great mass of people we naturally associate universal suffrage, for his influence went largely in this direction. We often hear people say that the experiment of universal suffrage is a failure, that it simply

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the opinion of Chief Justice John Marshall, p. 542, 1 Peters (Sup. Court U. S.) Rep., *The American Ins. Co. et al. v. Carter*, January term, 1828. The case was argued by Mr. Ogden for appellants, Mr. Whipple and Mr. Webster for Carter. This is all that appears in the decision touching the power to acquire territory.

results in the sway of demagogues who marshal at the polls their hordes of bribed or petted followers. This is no doubt very bad. It is a serious danger against which we must provide. But do these objectors ever stop to think how much worse it would be if the demagogue, instead of marshalling his creatures at the polls, were able to stand up and inflame their passions with the cry that in this country they have no vote, no share in making the laws, that they are kept out of their just dues by an upper class of rich men who can make the laws? If your hod-carrier was sulking for the want of a vote, he would be ten times more dangerous than any so-called friend of labour can now make him. As it is, his vote does not teach him much, because of his dull mind and narrow experience, but after all, it gives him the feeling that he is of some account in the world, that his individuality is to some extent respected; and this is unquestionably one of the most powerful and conservative safeguards of American civilization. In point of fact, our political freedom and our social welfare are to-day in infinitely greater peril from Pennsylvania's iron-masters and the owners of silver mines in Nevada than from all the ignorant foreigners that have flocked to us from Europe. Our legacy of danger for this generation was bequeathed us by Hamilton, not by Jefferson.

The American people took Jefferson into their hearts as they have never taken any other statesman until Lincoln in these latter days. His influence endured in his green old age at Monticello, the favoured spot where in the early days, when American independence had hardly been thought of, he used to sit under the trees with his brilliant young friend and



brother-in-law, Dabney Carr, and chat and dream over theories of government and power over men and the ways in which it asserted itself. The first term of his presidency was serene, because England and France were just at that moment at peace, and we were not called upon to take part in their quarrel. As candidate for a second term he simply swept the country. There was no one in 1804 who dreaded Jefferson. In the election of that year he had 162 electoral votes, while his Federalist opponent, Cotesworth Pinckney, had only 14. Jefferson's influence had become so great because he had absorbed all the strength of his adversary. He had not approved of Hamilton's acts, but he knew how to adopt them and appropriate them, just as Hamilton had adopted and appropriated Madison's theory of the Constitution. Here again — if I may say it once more — we see, not the French iconoclast, but the English squire.

Jefferson died on the 4th of July, 1826, at Monticello, just half a century after the promulgation of that Declaration of Independence which he had written, and John Adams had most powerfully defended in the Continental Congress. In the bitter political strife between 1795 and 1800 Jefferson and Adams had become enemies; but in later years the enmity had subsided as old party strife had subsided. Jefferson had carried the day. He had lived long enough to see the fruition of his work, to see the American people in full sympathy with him, and to win back the esteem of the great statesman, John Adams, from whom he had been so long divided. Could there have been a nobler triumph for this strong and sweet nature? On the 4th of July, 1826, at one

o'clock midday, he quietly passed away, serene in death as in all his life. Three hours before on that same day, at his home in Massachusetts, John Adams died, and just before the last breath left him the memories of the grand old times when Massachusetts and Virginia stood together and built up this Union flitted across his mind, and he murmured, "Thomas Jefferson still lives."





**V**

**JAMES MADISON**

**THE CONSTRUCTIVE STATESMAN**



## V

### JAMES MADISON

#### THE CONSTRUCTIVE STATESMAN

IN the work of constructing our national government and putting it into operation there were five men distinguished above all others. In an especial sense they deserve to be called the five founders of the American Union. Naming them chronologically, in the order of the times at which the influence of each was most powerfully felt, they come as follows: George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and John Marshall. But for Washington it is very doubtful if independence would have been won, and it is probable that the federal Constitution would not have been adopted. The fact that the experiment of the new government could be tried under his guidance made quite enough votes for it to turn the scales in its favour. His weight of authority was also needed to secure the adoption of Hamilton's measures and to prevent the half-formed nation from being drawn into the vortex of European war. As for Madison, he was the constructive thinker who played the foremost part among the men who made the Constitution, besides contributing powerfully with tongue and pen to the arguments which secured its ratification. In this work of advocacy Hamilton reënforced and surpassed Madison, and then in the work of prac-

tical construction, of setting the new government into operation, Hamilton, with his financial measures, took the lead. But the boldness of Hamilton's policy alarmed many people. There was a widespread fear that the government would develop into some kind of a despotism, and this dread seemed presently to be justified by the alien and sedition laws. Other people were equally afraid of democracy, because in France democracy was overturning society and setting up the guillotine. There was such a sad want of public confidence among the American people between 1790 and 1800, that an outbreak of civil war at the end of that period would not have been at all strange. To create the needed confidence, to show the doubters and scoffers on the one hand that the new government was really a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and on the other hand that such a government can be as orderly and conservative as any other, — this was the noble work of Jefferson, and it was in his presidency that the sentiment of loyalty to the Union may be said to have taken root in the hearts of the people. One thing more was needed, and that was a large, coherent body of judicial decisions establishing the scope and purport of the Constitution, so as to give adequate powers to the national government, while still protecting state rights. It was that prince of jurists, John Marshall, who, as chief justice of the United States for one-third of a century, thus finished the glorious work.

Of these five great men the names of Madison and Marshall are much less often upon people's lips than the others'. The work in which they excelled was not of a kind that appeals to the popular imagination, and

personally they were less picturesque figures than the other three. Especially is this true of Madison. There are many people who do not realize the importance of his career or the greatness of his powers. Mr. Goldwin Smith, some time ago, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* spoke of Madison as a respectable gentleman of moderate ability, whose most memorable act was allowing himself to be bullied and badgered into making war against Great Britain contrary to his own better judgment. This is very much as if one should say of Sir Isaac Newton that he was a corpulent old gentleman, remembered chiefly for having been master of the mint and author of a rather absurd book on the prophecies of the Old Testament. Mr. Smith evidently did not realize that he was speaking of a political philosopher worthy to be ranked with Montesquieu and Locke.

Some of the reasons for this partial eclipse of Madison's reputation will appear as we proceed. At present we may call attention to the prevailing tendency to associate historic events with some one commanding personality, and to forget all the rest. This is a labour-saving process, but it distorts our view of history. Hamilton was a much more picturesque personage than Madison, and so there has been an unconscious disposition to accredit him with Madison's work as well as his own. There are people who know enough about some things to write respectable books, and still know so little about American history as to suppose that our federal Constitution was substantially the work of Hamilton. One often sees remarks in print in which this gross error is implied, if not asserted. In point of fact Hamilton had almost nothing to do with the

actual work of making the Constitution. If you consult a set of Hamilton's writings, you observe that one volume is the "Federalist." That is quite right, but it need not make us forget that one-third of the volume was written by Madison. The work of Hamilton was in itself so great that there is no need for a Hamilton legend in which the attributes and achievements of other heroes are added to his own. Let us now pass in review some points in Madison's career.

His earliest paternal ancestor in Virginia seems to have been John Madison, who in 1653 took out a patent for land between the North and York rivers on Chesapeake Bay. There was a Captain Isaac Madison in Virginia as early as 1623, but his relationship to John is matter of doubt. John's grandson, Ambrose Madison, married Frances Taylor, one of whose brothers, named Zachary, was grandfather of President Zachary Taylor. The eldest child of Ambrose and Frances was James Madison, who was married in 1749 to Nelly Conway, of Port Conway. Their eldest child, James, was born at Port Conway on the 16th of March, 1751, so that he was eight years younger than Jefferson and six years older than Hamilton. He was the first of twelve children. His ancestors, as he says himself in a note furnished to my old friend Dr. Lyman Draper in 1834, "were not among the most wealthy of the country, but in independent and comfortable circumstances." Their position and training were those of the well-educated and liberal country squire. James's education was begun at an excellent school kept by a Scotchman named Donald Robertson, and his studies preparatory for college were completed at home under the care of the clergyman of the parish.

His father was colonel of the county militia, like Jefferson's father in the next county, and James could always remember the misery which followed upon Braddock's defeat, though he was only four years old at the time. His intimacy with Thomas Jefferson began at an early age, and led to a beautiful friendship which lasted through life. There was probably no other man for whom Jefferson felt such profound respect as for Madison, and the feeling was fully reciprocated. There were many points of resemblance between the two, such as the sweetness and purity of nature, the benevolence, the liberality of mind, the tireless industry, the intense thirst for knowledge; but nothing could have been more striking than the contrast in outward appearance between the colossal, athletic Jefferson, rosy and fresh as a boy until late in life, and the prim, little, weazen Madison, looking old before he was grown up. The excessive mental labour which the stronger man, aided by his horse and gun, could endure with impunity, made the other ill. When in college and afterward, Madison had to struggle against poor health. He was graduated at Princeton in 1772, and remained there another year, devoting himself to the study of Hebrew. On returning home he occupied himself with history, law, and theology, while teaching his brothers and sisters. Of the details of his youthful studies little is known, but his industry must have been very great; for in spite of the early age at which he became absorbed in the duties of public life, the range and solidity of his acquirements were extraordinary. For minute and thorough knowledge of ancient and modern history and of constitutional law, he was quite unequalled among the



Americans of the Revolutionary period; only Hamilton, Ellsworth, and Marshall approached him even at a distance. The early maturity of his power was not so astonishing as in Hamilton's case, but it was remarkable, and, like Washington, he was distinguished in youth for soundness of judgment and keenness of perception. Along with these admirable qualities, his lofty integrity and his warm interest in public affairs were well known to the people of Orange County, so that when, in the autumn of 1774, it was thought necessary to appoint a committee of safety, Madison was its youngest member. Early in 1776 he was chosen a delegate to the state convention, which met at Williamsburg in May. The first business of the convention was to instruct the Virginia delegation in the Continental Congress with regard to an immediate declaration of independence. Next came the work of making a constitution for the state, and Madison was one of the special committee appointed to deal with this problem. Here one of his first acts was highly characteristic. Religious liberty was a matter that strongly enlisted his feelings. When it was proposed that, under the new constitution, "all men should enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience," Madison pointed out that this provision did not go to the root of the matter. The free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience, is something which every man may demand as a right, not something for which he must ask as a privilege. To grant to the state the power of tolerating is implicitly to grant to it the power of prohibiting, whereas Madison would deny to it any jurisdiction whatever in the matter of religion.

The clause in the bill of rights, as finally adopted at his suggestion, accordingly declares that "all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." The incident illustrates not only Madison's liberality of spirit, but also his precision and forethought in so drawing up an instrument as to make it mean all that it was intended to mean. In his later career these qualities were especially brilliant and useful.

Madison was elected a member of the first legislature under the new state constitution, but he failed of reëlection because he refused to solicit votes or to furnish whiskey for thirsty voters. The new legislature then elected him a member of the governor's council, and in 1780 he was sent as delegate to the Continental Congress. The high consideration in which he was held showed itself in the number of important committees to which he was appointed. As chairman of a committee for drawing up instructions for John Jay, then minister at the court of Madrid, he insisted that in making a treaty with Spain our right to the free navigation of the Mississippi River should on no account be surrendered. Mr. Jay was instructed accordingly, but toward the end of 1780 the pressure of the war upon the Southern states increased the desire for an alliance with Spain to such a point that they seemed ready to purchase it at any price. Virginia therefore proposed that the surrender of our rights upon the Mississippi should be offered to Spain as the condition of an offensive and defensive alliance. Such a proposal was no doubt ill advised. Since Spain was already, on her own account and to the best of her ability, waging

war upon Great Britain in the West Indies and Florida, to say nothing of Gibraltar, it is doubtful if she could have done much more for the United States, even if we had offered her the whole Mississippi Valley. The offer of a permanent and invaluable right in exchange for a temporary and questionable advantage seemed to Mr. Madison very unwise; but as it was then generally held that in such matters representatives must be bound by the wishes of their constituents, he yielded, though under protest. But hardly had the fresh instructions been despatched to Mr. Jay when the overthrow of Cornwallis again turned the scale, and Spain was informed that, as concerned the Mississippi question, Congress was immovable. The foresight and sound judgment shown by Mr. Madison in this discussion added much to his reputation.

His next prominent action related to the impost law proposed in 1783. This was, in some respects, the most important question of the day. The chief source of the weakness of the United States during the Revolutionary War had been the impossibility of raising money by means of federal taxation. As long as money could be raised only through requisitions upon the state governments, and the different states could not be brought to agree upon any method of enforcing the requisitions, the state governments were sure to prove delinquent. Finding it impossible to obtain money for carrying on the war, Congress had resorted to the issue of large quantities of inconvertible paper, with the natural results. There had been a rapid inflation of values, followed by sudden bankruptcy and the prostration of national credit. In 1783 it had become difficult to obtain foreign loans,

and at home the government could not raise nearly enough money to defray its current expenses. To remedy the evil, a tariff of five per cent upon sundry imports, with a specific duty upon others, was proposed in Congress and offered to the several states for approval. To weaken as much as possible the objections to such a law, its operation was limited to twenty-five years. Even in this mild form, however, it was impossible to persuade the several states to submit to federal taxation. Virginia at first assented to the impost law, but afterward revoked her action. On this occasion Mr. Madison, feeling that the very existence of the nation was at stake, refused to be controlled by the action of his constituents. He persisted in urging the necessity of such an impost law, and eventually had the satisfaction of seeing Virginia adopt his view of the matter.

The discussion of the impost law in Congress revealed the antagonism between the slave states and those states which had emancipated their slaves. In endeavouring to apportion the quotas of revenue to be required of the several states, it was observed that, if taxation were to be distributed according to population, it made a great difference whether slaves were to be counted as population or not. If slaves were to be counted, the Southern states would have to pay more than their equitable share into the federal treasury ; if slaves were not to be counted, it was argued at the North that they would be paying less than their equitable share. Consequently at that time the North was inclined to maintain that the slaves were population, while the South preferred to regard them as chattels. The question was settled

by a compromise proposed by Mr. Madison: the slaves were rated as population, but in such wise that five of them were counted as three persons.

In 1784 Mr. Madison was again elected to the Virginia legislature, an office then scarcely inferior in dignity, and superior in influence, to that of delegate to the Continental Congress. His efforts were steadfastly devoted to the preparation and advancing of measures calculated to increase the strength of the federal government. He supported the proposed amendment to the Articles of Confederation, giving to Congress control over the foreign trade of the states; and pending the adoption of such a measure he secured the passage of a port bill restricting the entry of foreign ships to certain specified ports. The purpose of this was to facilitate the collection of revenue, but it was partially defeated in its operation by successive amendments increasing the number of ports. While the weakness of the general government and the need for strengthening it were daily growing more apparent, the question of religious liberty was the subject of earnest discussion in the Virginia legislature. An attempt was made to lay a tax upon all the people "for the support of teachers of the Christian religion." At first Madison was almost the only one to see clearly the serious danger lurking in such a tax; that it would be likely to erect a State Church and curtail men's freedom of belief and worship. Madison's position here well illustrated the remark that intelligent persistence is capable of making one person a majority. His energetic opposition resulted at first in postponing the measure. Then he wrote a "Memorial and Remonstrance," setting forth its dangerous charac-

ter with wonderful clearness and cogency. He sent this paper all over the state for signatures, and in the course of a twelvemonth had so educated the people that in the election of 1785 the question of religious freedom was made a test question; and in the ensuing session the dangerous bill was defeated, and in place thereof it was enacted "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities." In thus abolishing religious tests, Virginia came to the front among all the American states, as Massachusetts had come to the front in the abolition of negro slavery. Nearly all the states still imposed religious tests upon civil office holders, from simply declaring a general belief in the infallibleness of the Bible, to accepting the doctrine of the Trinity. Madison's "Religious Freedom Act" was translated into French and Italian, and was widely read and commented upon in Europe. In our own history it set a most valuable precedent for other states to follow.

The attitude of Mr. Madison with regard to paper money was also very important. The several states had then the power of issuing promissory notes and making them a legal tender, and many of them shamefully abused this power. The year 1786 witnessed perhaps the most virulent craze for paper money that has ever attacked the American people. In Virginia

the masterly reasoning and the resolute attitude of a few great political leaders saved the state from yielding to the delusion, and among these leaders Madison was foremost. But his most important work in the Virginia legislature was that which led directly to the Annapolis convention, and thus ultimately to the framing of the Constitution of the United States. The source from which such vast results were to flow was the necessity of an agreement between Maryland and Virginia with regard to the navigation of the Potomac River and the collection of duties at ports on its banks. Commissioners, appointed by the two states to discuss this question, met early in 1785, and recommended that a uniform tariff should be adopted and enforced upon both banks. But a further question, also closely connected with the navigation of the Potomac, now came up for discussion. The tide of westward migration had for some time been pouring over the Alleghanies, and, owing to complications with the Spanish power in the Mississippi Valley, there was some danger that the United States might not be able to keep its hold upon the new settlements. It was necessary to strengthen the commercial ties between East and West, and to this end the Potomac Company was formed for the purpose of improving the navigation of the upper waters of the Potomac and connecting them by good roads and canals with the upper waters of the Ohio at Pittsburg—an enterprise which in due course of time resulted in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The first president of the Potomac Company was George Washington, who well understood that the undertaking was quite as important in its political as in its commercial bearings. At the


same time it was proposed to connect the Potomac and Delaware rivers with a canal, and a company was organized for this purpose. This made it desirable that the four states — Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania — should agree upon the laws for regulating interstate traffic through this system of waterways. But from this it was but a short step to the conclusion that, since the whole commercial system of the United States confessedly needed overhauling, it might perhaps be as well for all the thirteen states to hold a convention for considering the matter. When such a suggestion was communicated from the legislature of Maryland to that of Virginia, it afforded Madison the opportunity for which he had been eagerly waiting. Some time before he had prepared a resolution for the appointment of commissioners to confer with commissioners from the other states concerning the trade of the country and the advisableness of intrusting its regulation to the federal government. This resolution Madison left to be offered to the assembly by some one less conspicuously identified with Federalist opinions than himself; and it was accordingly presented by John Tyler, father of the future President of that name. The motion was unfavourably received and was laid upon the table; but when the message came from Maryland the matter was reconsidered and the resolution passed. Annapolis was selected as the place for the convention, which assembled September 11, 1786. Only five states — Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York — were represented at the meeting. Maryland, which had first suggested the convention, had seen the appointed time arrive without even taking



the trouble to select commissioners. As the representation was so inadequate, the convention thought it best to defer action, and accordingly adjourned after adopting an address to the states, which was prepared by Alexander Hamilton. The address incorporated a suggestion from New Jersey, which indefinitely enlarged the business to be treated by such a convention; it was to deal not only with the regulation of commerce, but with "other important matters." Acting upon this cautious hint, the address recommended the calling of a second convention, to be held at Philadelphia on the second Monday of May, 1787. Mr. Madison was one of the commissioners at Annapolis, and was very soon appointed a delegate to the new convention, along with Washington, Randolph, Mason, and others. The avowed purpose of the new convention was to "devise such provisions as shall appear necessary to render the Constitution of the federal government adequate to the exigencies of the Union, and to report to Congress such an act as, when agreed to by them, and confirmed by the legislatures of every state, would effectually provide for the same." The report of the Annapolis commissioners was brought before Congress in October, in the hope that Congress would earnestly recommend to the several states the course of action therein suggested. At first the objections to the plan prevailed in Congress, but the events of the winter went far toward persuading men in all parts of the country that the only hope of escaping anarchy lay in a thorough revision of the imperfect scheme of government under which we were then living. The paper money craze in so many of the states, the violent proceedings in the Rhode Island

legislature, the riots in Vermont and New Hampshire, the Shays rebellion in Massachusetts, the dispute with Spain about the navigation of the Mississippi, and the consequent imminent danger of separation between North and South, had all come together; and now the last ounce was laid upon the camel's back in the failure of the impost amendment. In February, 1787, just as Mr. Madison, who had been chosen a delegate to Congress, arrived in New York, the legislature of that state refused its assent to the amendment, which was thus defeated. Thus, only three months before the time designated for the meeting of the Philadelphia convention, Congress was decisively informed that it would not be allowed to take any effectual measures for raising a revenue. This accumulation of difficulties made Congress much more ready to listen to the weighty arguments of Mr. Madison, and presently Congress itself proposed a convention at Philadelphia identical with the one recommended by the Annapolis commissioners, and thus in its own way sanctioned their action.

The assembling of the convention at Philadelphia was an event to which Madison, by persistent energy and skill, had contributed more than any other man in the country, with the possible exception of Hamilton. It was in the convention that Madison did the greatest work of his life. Before the convention met he had laid before his colleagues of the Virginia delegation the outlines of the scheme that was presented to the convention as the "Virginia plan." Of the delegates Edmund Randolph was then governor of Virginia, and it was he that presented the plan and made the opening speech in defence of it; but its chief author



was Madison. This "Virginia plan" struck directly at the root of the evils from which our federal government had suffered under the articles of confederation. The weakness of that government had consisted in the fact that it operated only upon states, and not upon individuals. Only states, not individuals, were represented in the Continental Congress, which accordingly resembled a European congress rather than an English parliament. According to the ideas entertained at the time of the Revolution, the legislative assembly of each state was its House of Commons; in one state, North Carolina, it was called by that name. Congresses were extraordinary meetings of delegates held on occasions when the several states felt it necessary to consult with each other, just as sometimes happens in Europe. There was a Congress at Albany in 1754, and one at New York in 1765, and one at Philadelphia in 1774; the advent of war and revolution had made this last one permanent, and it was the only body that represented the United States as a whole. Yet the delegates were much more like envoys from sovereign states than like members of a legislative body. They might deliberate and advise, but had no means of enforcing their will upon the several state governments; and hence they could neither raise a revenue nor preserve order. Now the cure for this difficulty, devised by Madison and first suggested in the "Virginia plan," lay in transforming the Congress into a parliament, in making it a national legislature elected by the whole American people and having the same authority over them that each state legislature was wont to exercise over the people of its own state. It was really throwing Congress overboard and creating a parliament

instead, only it would not do to call it so, because Americans at that time were not fond of the name. The new House of Representatives could of course tax the people because it represented them. For the same reason it could make laws, and to enable it to enforce them there was to be a federal executive and a federal judiciary. To the familiar state governments under which people lived Madison thus superadded another government, complete in all its branches and likewise coming into direct contact with the people. And yet this new government was not to override the old ones; state governors are not subordinate to the President, or state legislatures to Congress; each is sovereign within its own sphere. This was the supreme act of creative statesmanship that made our country what it is; transforming it, as the Germans say, from a *Staatesbund* into a *Bundesstaat*, or, as I may translate these terms, from a Band-of-States into a Banded-State. All this seems natural enough now, but the men who could thus think out the problem a century ago must be ranked as high among constructive statesmen as Newton among scientific discoverers. It is to Madison that we owe this grand and luminous conception of the two coexisting and harmonious spheres of government, although the Constitution, as actually framed, was the result of skilful compromises by which the Virginia plan was modified and improved in many important points. In its original shape that plan went farther toward national consolidation than the Constitution as adopted. It contemplated a national legislature to be composed of two houses, but both the upper and the lower house were to represent population instead of states. Here it encountered fierce opposition

from the smaller states, under the lead of New Jersey, until the matter was settled by the famous Connecticut compromise, according to which the upper house was to represent states, while the lower house represented population. Madison's original scheme, moreover, would have allowed the national legislature to set aside at discretion such state laws as it might deem unconstitutional. It may seem strange to find Madison, who afterward drafted the Virginia resolutions of 1798, now suggesting and defending a provision so destructive of state rights. It shows how strongly he was influenced at the time by the desire to put an end to the prevailing anarchy. The discussion of this matter in the convention, as we read it to-day, brings out in a very strong light the excellence of the arrangement finally adopted, by which the constitutionality of state laws is left to be determined through the decision of the federal Supreme Court.

In all the discussions in the federal convention, Madison naturally took a leading part. Besides the work of cardinal importance which he achieved as principal author of the Virginia plan, especial mention must be made of the famous compromise that adjusted the distribution of representatives between the Northern and the Southern states. We have seen that in the Congress of 1783, when it was a question of taxation, the South was inclined to regard slaves as chattels, while the North preferred to regard them as population. Now, when it had come to be a question of the apportionment of representation, the case was reversed; it was the South that wished to count slaves as population, while the North insisted that they should be classed as chattels. Here Mr. Madison

proposed the same compromise that had succeeded in Congress four years before; and Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, who had supported him on the former occasion, could hardly do otherwise than come again to his side. It was agreed that in counting population, whether for direct taxation or for representation in the lower house of Congress, five slaves should be reckoned as three individuals. In the history of the formation of our federal Union, this compromise was of cardinal importance. Without it the Union would undoubtedly have gone to pieces at the outset, and it was for this reason that the northern Abolitionists, Gouverneur Morris and Rufus King, joined with Washington and Madison, and with the pro-slavery Pinckneys, in subscribing to it. Some of the evils resulting from this compromise have led historians, writing from the Abolitionist point of view, to condemn it utterly. Nothing can be clearer, however, than that, in order to secure the adoption of the Constitution, it was absolutely necessary to satisfy South Carolina. This was proved by the course of events in 1788, when there was a strong party in Virginia in favour of a separate confederacy of Southern states. By South Carolina's prompt ratification of the Constitution, this scheme was completely defeated, and a most formidable obstacle to the formation of a more perfect union was removed. Of all the compromises in American history, this of the so-called "three-fifths rule" was probably the most important; until the beginning of the Civil War, there was hardly a political movement of any consequence that was not affected by it.

Mr. Madison's services in connection with the founding of our federal government were thus, up to

this point, of the most transcendent kind. We have seen that he played a leading part in the difficult work of getting a convention to assemble; the merit of this he shares with other eminent men, and notably with Washington and Hamilton. Then he was chief author of the most fundamental features in the Constitution, those which transformed our government from a loose and feeble confederacy of states into a strong federal nation; and to him is due the principal credit for the compromise that made the adoption of the Constitution possible for all the states. After the adjournment of the convention his services did not cease. Among those whose influence in bringing about the ratification of the Constitution was felt all over the country, he shares with Hamilton the foremost place. According to his own memorandum he was the author of twenty-nine of the essays in the "Federalist," while fifty-one were written by Hamilton and five by Jay. Some of the essays, however, seem to have been written by Madison and Hamilton jointly, and as to others there has been more or less dispute. The question is not of great importance. Very likely Madison would have had a larger share in the work had he not been obliged, in March, 1788, to return to Virginia, in order to take part in the state convention for deciding upon the ratification of the Constitution. Here the task before him, though not so arduous as that of Hamilton in the New York convention, was arduous enough. Unlike his friend Jefferson, who could hardly speak in public, Madison was one of the most formidable parliamentary debaters that ever lived. Without a particle of eloquence or of what is called personal magnetism, with a dry style and a mild, unimpassioned

delivery, he would nevertheless have been a fair match for Charles Fox or the younger Pitt. His vast knowledge was always at command, his ideas were always clear and his grasp of the situation perfect, and although he was so modest that the colour came and went upon his cheeks as upon a young girl's, he was never flurried or thrown off his guard. He represented pure intelligence, which is doubtless one reason why his popular fame has not been equal to his merit. There is nothing especially picturesque about pure intelligence, but it is a great power nevertheless. The opposition in Virginia was strong and well organized, and had for leaders such eminent patriots as Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee. The alliance between South Carolina and the New England states, which in exchange for a prolongation of the foreign slave-trade for twenty years gave to Congress the power of regulating commerce by a simple majority vote, had alarmed Virginia. It was feared that it would enable the Northern states to enter upon a commercial policy in which the interests of Virginia would be disregarded. There was also a party from the Kentucky district, which was disgusted at the Northern indifference to the free navigation of the Mississippi River, and thought that the interests of all that part of the country could best be secured by a separate Southern confederacy. As just observed, South Carolina had already defeated this dangerous scheme by ratifying the Constitution. Nevertheless, when the Virginia convention met, the opponents of the Constitution were doubtless in the majority. The debates lasted nearly a month, and for a considerable part of this time the outlook was not promising. The discussion



was conducted mainly between Madison and Henry, the former being chiefly assisted by Randolph, Wythe, Marshall, Pendleton, and young Henry Lee; the latter by Mason, Monroe, Harrison, and Tyler. To Madison, more than to any one else, it was due that the Constitution was at length ratified, while the narrowness of the majority — eighty-nine to seventy-nine — bore witness to the severity of the contest. It did not appear that the people of Virginia were even yet convinced by the arguments that had prevailed in the convention. The assembly that met in the following October showed a heavy majority of Anti-federalists, and under Henry's leadership it called upon Congress for a second national convention, to reconsider the work done by the first. Senators were now to be chosen for the first United States Senate, and Henry, in naming Richard Henry Lee and William Grayson, both Anti-federalists, as the two men who ought to be chosen, took pains to mention James Madison as the one man who on no account whatever ought to be elected senator. Henry was successful in carrying this point. The next thing was to keep Madison out of Congress, and Henry's friends sought to accomplish this by means of the device afterward known as "gerrymandering"; but the attempt failed, and Madison was elected to the first national House of Representatives. His great knowledge, and the part he had played in building up the framework of the government, made him from the outset the leading member of the House. His first motion was one for raising a revenue by tariff and tonnage duties. He offered the resolutions for creating the executive departments of foreign affairs, of the treasury, and of war. He

proposed twelve amendments to the Constitution, in order to meet the objection, urged in many quarters, that that instrument did not contain a bill of rights. The first ten of these amendments were adopted, and became part of the Constitution in 1791.

The first division of political parties under the Constitution began to show itself in the debates upon Hamilton's financial measures as Secretary of the Treasury, and in this division we see Madison acting as leader of the opposition. By many writers this has been regarded as indicating a radical change of attitude on his part, and sundry explanations have been offered to account for the presumed inconsistency. He has been supposed to have succumbed to the personal influence of Jefferson, and to have yielded his own convictions to the desires and prejudices of his constituents. Such explanations are hardly borne out by what we know of Madison's career up to this point; and, moreover, they are uncalled for. If we consider carefully the circumstances of the time, the presumed inconsistency in his conduct disappears. The new Republican party, of which he soon became one of the leaders, was something quite different in its attitude from the Anti-federalist party of 1787-1790. There was ample room in it for men who, in those critical years, had been stanch Federalists, and as time passed this came to be more and more the case, until, after a quarter of a century, the entire Federalist party, with the exception of a few inflexible men in New England, had been absorbed by the Republican party. In 1790, since the federal Constitution had been actually adopted and was going into operation, and since the extent of power that it granted to the general govern-

ment must be gradually tested by the discussion of specific measures, it followed that the only natural and healthful division of parties must be the division between strict and loose constructionists. It was to be expected that Anti-federalists would become strict constructionists, and so most of them did, though examples were not wanting of such men swinging to the opposite extreme of politics and advocating an extension of the powers of the federal government. This was the case with Patrick Henry. But there was no reason in the world why a Federalist of 1787-1790 must thereafter, in order to preserve his consistency, become a loose constructionist. It was entirely consistent for a statesman to advocate the adoption of the Constitution, while convinced that the powers specifically granted therein to the general government were ample and that great care should be taken not to add indefinitely to such powers through rash and loose methods of interpretation. Not only is such an attitude perfectly reasonable in itself, but it is, in particular, the one that a principal author of the Constitution would have been very likely to take; and no doubt it was just this attitude that Mr. Madison took in the early sessions of Congress. The occasions on which he assumed it were, moreover, eminently proper, and afford an admirable illustration of the difference in temper and mental habit between himself and Hamilton. The latter had always more faith in the heroic treatment of political questions than Madison. The restoration of American credit in 1790 was a task that demanded heroic measures, and it was fortunate that we had such a man as Hamilton to undertake it. But undoubtedly the assumption of state debts by the

federal government, however admirably it met the emergency of the moment, was such a measure as might easily create a dangerous precedent, and there was certainly nothing strange or inconsistent in Madison's opposition to it. A similar explanation will cover his opposition to Hamilton's national bank; and indeed, with the considerations here given as a clew, there is little or nothing in Mr. Madison's career in Congress that is not thoroughly intelligible. At the time, however, the Federalists, disappointed at losing a man of so much power, misunderstood his acts and misrepresented his motives, and the old friendship between him and Hamilton gave way to mutual distrust and dislike. In the political agitation caused by the French Revolution, Mr. Madison sympathized with the revolutionists, though he did not go so far in this direction as Jefferson. In the debates upon Jay's treaty with Great Britain, he led the opposition, and earnestly supported the resolution asking President Washington to submit to the House of Representatives copies of the papers relating to the negotiation. After three weeks of debate the resolution was passed, but Washington refused the request on the ground that the making of treaties was intrusted by the Constitution to the President and the Senate, and that the lower house was not entitled to meddle with their work.

At the close of Washington's second administration, Mr. Madison retired for a brief season from public life. During this difficult period the country had been fortunate in having, as leader of the opposition in Congress, a man so wise in counsel, so temperate in spirit, and so courteous in demeanour. Whatever else

might be said of Madison's conduct in opposition, it could never be called factious; it was calm, generous, and disinterested. About two years before the close of his career in Congress, he married Mrs. Dolly Payne Todd, a beautiful widow, much younger than himself; and about this time he seems to have built the house at Montpelier which was to be his home during his later years. But retirement from public life, in any real sense of the phrase, was not yet possible for such a man. The wrath of the French government over Jay's treaty led to depredations upon American shipping, to the sending of commissions to Paris, and to the blackmailing attempts of Talleyrand, as shown up in the X. Y. Z. despatches. In the fierce outburst of indignation that in America greeted these disclosures, in the sudden desire for war with France, which went so far as to vent itself in actual fighting on the sea, though war was never declared, the Federalist party believed itself to be so strong that it proceeded at once to make one of the greatest blunders ever made by a political party, in passing the alien and sedition acts. This high-handed legislation caused a sudden revulsion of feeling in favour of the Republicans, and called forth vigorous remonstrance. Party feeling has perhaps never in this country been so bitter, except just before the Civil War. A series of resolutions, drawn up by Madison, was adopted in 1798 by the legislature of Virginia; while a similar series, still more pronounced, drawn up by Jefferson, was adopted in the same year by the legislature of Kentucky. The Virginia resolutions asserted with truth that, in adopting the federal Constitution, the states had surrendered only a limited portion of their powers; and went on to

declare that, whenever the federal government should exceed its constitutional authority, it was the business of the state governments to interfere and pronounce such action unconstitutional. Accordingly, Virginia declared the alien and sedition laws unconstitutional, and invited the other states to join in the declaration. Not meeting with a favourable response, Virginia renewed these resolutions the next year. There was nothing necessarily seditious, or tending toward secession, in the Virginia resolutions; but the attitude assumed in them was uncalled for on the part of any state, inasmuch as there existed, in the federal Supreme Court, a tribunal competent to decide upon the constitutionality of acts of Congress. The Kentucky resolutions went farther. They declared that our federal Constitution was a compact, to which the several states were the one party and the federal government was the other, and each party must decide for itself as to when the compact was infringed, and as to the proper remedy to be adopted. When the resolutions were repeated, in 1799, a clause was added, which went still further and mentioned "nullification" as the suitable remedy, and one that any state might employ. In the Virginia resolutions there was neither mention nor intention of nullification as a remedy. Mr. Madison lived to witness South Carolina's attempt at nullification in 1832, and in a very able paper, written in the last year of his life, he conclusively refuted the idea that his resolutions of 1798 afforded any justification for such an attempt, and showed that what they really contemplated was a protest on the part of all the state governments in common. Doubtless such a remedy was clumsy and impracticable, and the sugges-

tion of it does not deserve to be ranked along with Mr. Madison's best work in constructive statesmanship; but it certainly contained no logical basis for what its author unsparingly denounced as the "twin heresies" of nullification and secession.

With regard to the Kentucky resolutions the case is different. They certainly furnished a method of stating the case, as to the relations between the states and the federal government, of which Calhoun afterward made use in developing his theory of nullification. There has been much interesting discussion as to how far Jefferson is to be held responsible for this view. But this discussion has generally proceeded upon the tacit and perhaps unconscious assumption that in 1798 such an idea as that of nullification was a novel heresy, and that in lending countenance to it, even in the slightest degree, Jefferson figured as in some sense the inventor of a notion which bore fruit in the secession movement of 1861 and the great Civil War. A dispassionate student of history can have no wish to absolve Jefferson or any one else from the proper responsibility for his political acts. But the way in which this case is usually stated, and still more the mood in which it is apt to be stated, is not strictly historical. It would be more instructive to bear in mind that, in 1798, before Marshall's career as chief justice had begun, the functions of the Supreme Court and its efficiency in checking usurpations of power were as yet mere matter of theory and very imperfectly realized by the people; that the new government was as yet an experiment believed by half the people to be a very hazardous experiment; that thus far its

administration had been monopolized by one party, the measures of which, even when most beneficial, had been regarded with widespread distrust and dread; and that this distrust now seemed all at once to be justified by the passage of laws that were certainly the most atrocious in all our history except the Fugitive Slave Law. If under these circumstances there were some who believed that a confederacy in which such laws might be nullified was preferable to a Union in which men might be sent to jail, as under the Stuart kings, for expressing their honest opinions in the newspapers, we ought not to blame them. Such a Union would not have been worth the efforts that it cost to frame it. Taught by experience, we can now see that the fears expressed or implied in the Kentucky resolutions were really groundless. But that they were so, that the people were relieved of such fears and the public confidence restored, so that the Union began for the first time to be really loved and cherished with a sentiment of loyalty, was due chiefly to Jefferson's election as President in 1800 and the conservative policy which he thereafter pursued. When the government passed out of the hands of the party which had enacted the alien and sedition laws, the dread subsided, and the vitality of the Kentucky resolutions was suspended until Calhoun revived it thirty years later. When that new crisis came, the exigency was such that, if Calhoun had not found the letter of these resolutions ready to hand, the sentiment nevertheless existed, out of which he would have made his doctrines.

In 1799 Madison was again elected a member of the Virginia legislature, and in 1801, at Jefferson's



urgent desire, he became Secretary of State. In accepting this appointment, he entered upon a new career, in many respects different from that which he had hitherto followed. His work as a constructive statesman — which was so great as to place him in the foremost rank among the men that have built up nations — was by this time substantially completed. During the next few years the constitutional questions that had hitherto occupied him played a part subordinate to that played by questions of foreign policy, and in this new sphere Mr. Madison was not, by nature or training, fitted to exercise such a controlling influence as he had formerly brought to bear in the framing of our federal government. As Secretary of State, he was an able lieutenant to Mr. Jefferson, but his genius was not that of an executive officer so much as that of a lawgiver. He brought his great historical and legal learning to bear in a paper entitled “An Examination of the British Doctrine which subjects to Capture a Neutral Trade not Open in the Time of Peace.” But the troubled period that followed the rupture of the treaty of Amiens was not one in which legal arguments, however masterly, counted for much in bringing angry and insolent combatants to terms. In the gigantic struggle between England and Napoleon, the commerce of the United States was ground to pieces as between the upper and the nether millstone; and in some respects there is no chapter in American history more painful for an American citizen to read. The outrageous affair of the *Leopard* and the *Chesapeake* was but the most flagrant of a series of wrongs and insults, against which Jefferson’s embargo was doubtless an absurd and feeble protest, but perhaps at

the same time pardonable as the only weapon left us in that period of national weakness.

Affairs were drawing slowly toward some kind of crisis when, at the expiration of Jefferson's second term, Mr. Madison was elected President of the United States by 122 electoral votes against 47 for Cotesworth Pinckney and 6 for George Clinton, who received 113 votes for the vice-presidency, and was elected to that office. The opposition of the New England states to the embargo had by this time brought about its repeal and the substitution for it of the act declaring non-intercourse with England and France. By this time, many of the most intelligent Federalists, including John Quincy Adams, had gone over to the Republicans. In 1810 Congress repealed the non-intercourse act, which as a measure of intimidation had proved ineffectual. Congress now sought to use the threat of non-intercourse as a kind of bribe, and informed England and France that if either nation would repeal its obnoxious edicts, the non-intercourse act would be revived against the other. Napoleon took prompt advantage of this, and informed Mr. Madison's government that he revoked his Berlin and Milan decrees as far as American ships were concerned; but at the same time he gave secret orders by which the decrees were to be practically enforced as harshly as ever. The lie served its purpose, and Congress revived the non-intercourse act as against Great Britain alone. In 1811 hostilities began on sea and land, in the affair of *Tippecanoe* and of the *President* and *Little Belt*. The growing desire for war was shown in the choice of Henry Clay for Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Mr.


Madison was nominated for a second term, on condition of adopting the war policy.

The New England Federalists at once accused him here of proving recreant to his own convictions, and the charge has since been often reiterated by Federalist writers. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that, as to the question of the advisableness of declaring war against England, he did not share in the decided convictions of Clay and Calhoun on the one hand or of the New England leaders on the other. His mind was more evenly balanced, and his natural inclinations led him to shrink from war so long as any other policy was available. As to the entire justice of the war, on our side, there could of course be no doubt. No one called it in question except a few superannuated Federalists in New England. The only question was as to whether a war policy was practicable at that moment, and on this point, in yielding to the arguments of Clay and Calhoun, if Mr. Madison sacrificed convictions, they were certainly not convictions that were deeply rooted. He did not approach such questions in the mood of an Andrew Jackson, but in the mood of a philosopher, who hesitates and acts sometimes in a yielding to pressure of argument that is akin to weakness. On June 18, 1812, war was declared, and before the autumn election a series of remarkable naval victories had made it popular. Mr. Madison was reëlected by 128 electoral votes, against 89 for De Witt Clinton of New York. The one absorbing event, which filled the greater part of his second term, was the war with Great Britain, which was marked by some brilliant victories and some grave disasters, including the cap-

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ture of Washington by British troops and the flight of the government from the national capital. Whatever opinion may be held as to the character of the war and its results, there is a general agreement that its management, on the part of the United States, was feeble. Mr. Madison was essentially a man of peace, and as the manager of a great war he was conspicuously out of his element. The history of that war plays a great part in the biographies of the military and naval heroes that figured in it; it is a cardinal event in the career of Andrew Jackson or Isaac Hull. In the biography of Madison it is an episode, which may be passed over briefly. The greatest part of his career was finished before he held the highest offices; his immortal renown will rest chiefly or entirely upon what he did before the beginning of the nineteenth century.

After the close of his second term, in 1817, Mr. Madison retired to his estate at Montpelier, where he spent nearly twenty happy years with books and friends. This sweet and tranquil old age he had well earned by services to his fellow-creatures such as it is given to but few men to render. Among intelligent students of history, there is no one now who would dispute his claim to be ranked beside Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Marshall in the founding of our nation. But his part was peculiar. Of all these great men, he was preëminently the modest scholar and the profound thinker. There was just one moment at which he was the greatest of all, and that was the moment when his grand path-breaking idea was presented to the federal convention in the shape of the Virginia plan. The idea of the twofold government, so



simple now, so abstruse then, was Madison's idea. And it was the central idea, the fruitful idea, something which every one else would have missed, that we owe to this quiet, unassuming, unpicturesque little man — this acute thinker and rare constructive genius, — James Madison.

**VI**

**ANDREW JACKSON**

**FRONTIERSMAN AND SOLDIER**



## VI

### ANDREW JACKSON

#### FRONTIERSMAN AND SOLDIER

IN one of the debates on the Oregon question in the United States Senate, about five and fifty years ago, Senator McDuffie of South Carolina laughed to scorn the idea that such a remote country as Oregon could ever be of the slightest use to us. Just imagine a state, said he, the representatives from which would require the whole of the year to get to Washington and back! It was because of this short-sightedness, which was shared by all our Eastern statesmen, that we consented to divide the disputed territory with Great Britain. If our government could only then have followed the wise and bold advice of the far-sighted Benton, the whole of that magnificent country now known as British Columbia might have been ours, and in all probability without a war.

But if those statesmen who thought the northern Pacific coast not worth fighting for seem narrow-minded, what shall be said of the views expressed by Gouverneur Morris in the convention that framed the Constitution of the United States? Morris was not only one of the most brilliant men in that wonderful convention, but as far as the original thirteen states were concerned he was inclined to broad and liberal views. But when it came to the imperial domain com-



prised between the Alleghany Mountains and the Mississippi River, the country which the superb diplomacy of Adams and Jay had secured for us in the treaty of 1783, that was for Gouverneur Morris nothing but backwoods. He wanted to have the Constitution so framed that this region should forever be kept subordinate to the Atlantic States. It would never do, he said, to intrust too much legislative power to illiterate back-country people; it needed the wisdom that is found in cities and in polite society to hold them in check and prevent them from filling the statute book with absurd and dangerous laws. It was gravely to be feared that the population of the Mississippi Valley might by and by come to exceed that of the Atlantic coast; and accordingly this descendant of New York patroons desired that some provision should be made by which in such an event the minority might rule. It does not seem to have occurred to him that, when the dreaded day should arrive, this back-country people would occupy a central position and have great cities and polite society of their own, with views as much entitled to consideration as anybody's.

These suggestions of Gouverneur Morris were too impracticable to meet with much favour in the convention, but the feeling which prompted them was common enough at that time and is not yet quite extinct. It is only by slow degrees that the American people have outgrown this old aristocratic notion that political power ought to be confined to certain groups or classes of persons who, for one reason or another, are supposed to be best fitted to exercise it. The Americans of 1787 were not so very unlike their British cousins in their way of looking at such matters,

and this was especially true of the Federalist leaders, such as Hamilton, John Adams, Pickering, the Pinckneys, and to some extent even Washington. But for the wholesome counter-influence of such men as Jefferson and Gallatin, the political structure reared in 1787 would have rested upon too narrow a basis. For the thorough development of American democracy, however, a second struggle with the wilderness seems to have been needed. The pure American spirit first came to maturity in the breasts of that rugged population that since the days of Daniel Boone and James Robertson had been pouring down the western slope of the Alleghanies and making the beginnings of the two great commonwealths, Kentucky and Tennessee. These were states that from the outset owed no allegiance to a sovereign power beyond the ocean. Their affairs were never administered by British officials, and from the first moment of their existence as organized communities, Great Britain was to them a foreign country. The importance of this new development for a long time passed unnoticed by the older communities on the Atlantic coast, and especially by the New England states, which were the most remote from it alike in geographical position and in social structure. For a long time there was a feeling about the Western country and its inhabitants not unlike that to which Gouverneur Morris gave expression. There was an ignorant superciliousness, such as some Englishmen are still found to entertain toward the United States as a whole. This feeling has been apt to colour the books on American history written by Eastern men. With the best of intentions, and without the least suspicion of the narrowness of their views, such writers,

while freely admitting the vastness and strength of the Western country, and the picturesqueness of its annals, have utterly failed to comprehend the importance of its share in the political development of the American nation. There could be no better illustration of this than the crudeness of the opinions current in our literature and taught in our text-books concerning the career of Andrew Jackson, the first American citizen who crossed the Alleghanies to take his seat in the White House.

In studying the life of this great man, we must first observe the characteristics of the people among whom his earlier years were spent, and of whom he was to such a marked degree the representative and leader. So much has been said about the great influence of New England in determining the character of the West that we must be careful not to forget that in point of time that influence has been distinctly secondary. It was Virginia, together with the mountain districts of Pennsylvania and the Carolinas, that first determined the character of the West. Before the overflow of population from New England could make much impression upon the Western territory, it had a great work to do in occupying rural New York. While people in Connecticut were still speaking of Syracuse and Rochester as "out West," the pioneers from Virginia and North Carolina had built their log cabins on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi. A little later this powerful Southern swarm passed on into Missouri and Arkansas, and even invaded the Northwestern Territory, where its influence was seen in repeated attempts, on the part of the inhabitants of the regions since known as Indiana and Illinois, to


persuade Congress to repeal the antislavery clause of the Ordinance of 1787. In this Southern stream of westward migration three distinct currents were discernible. There were, first, the representatives of old Virginia families moving on parallels of latitude across Kentucky and into Missouri, as fine a race of men as can be found in the world, and always fruitful in able and gallant leaders. In the second place, there were the poor whites, or descendants of the outlaws and indented white servants of the seventeenth century in Virginia; we find them moving across Tennessee into southern Missouri and Arkansas, while some of them made their way into Indiana and the Egyptian district of Illinois. For the most part these men were an unprogressive, thriftless, and turbulent element in society. Thirdly, the men who, perhaps more than any others, gave to the young West its character were the hardy mountaineers of the Alleghany region. If one were required to give a recipe for compounding the most masterful race of men that can be imagined, one could hardly do better than say, "To a very liberal admixture of Scotch and Scotch-Irish with English stock, with a considerable infusion of Huguenot, add a trace of Swiss and Welsh, and set the whole to work for half a century hewing down the forest and waging an exterminating warfare with Indians." From their forefathers in the highlands of Britain these sturdy pioneers inherited an appreciation of the virtues of mountain dew, and the westward march of American civilization has been at all times heralded by the rude temples of that freakish spirit, until the placid German has followed in his turn, with the milder rites of Gaminus. In religion these men were, for the most

part, Puritan. There cannot be a greater error than to speak of American Puritanism as peculiar to New England. That which was peculiar to the New England colonies was not the simple fact of Puritanism, but the manner in which that Puritanism dominated their social structure and determined their political attitude. Their origin dates from the time when the Puritan idea was seeking to incarnate itself in a theocratic form of government. That is what has given to New England its distinctive character. As for Puritanism, regarded as an affair of temperament, belief, and mental habit, it has always been widely diffused throughout English-speaking America. There was a rather strong infusion of it in Maryland, and a very strong one in South Carolina; and nowhere do we find the Puritan spirit, with its virtues and its faults, its intensity and its narrowness, more conspicuously manifested than in those children of English dissenters and Scottish covenanters and Huguenot refugees that went forth from the Alleghanies to colonize the Mississippi Valley. Originally their theology was Calvinistic, but during the latter part of the eighteenth century a great wave of Wesleyanism swept over this part of the country, and Baptist preachers also made many converts.

Devout religious sentiment, in this pioneer society, did not succeed in preventing a great deal of turbulence; and herein we find a contrast with early New England, which has in later times left its traces far and wide upon the habits and manners of different parts of the United States. Where the early settler of Connecticut or Massachusetts would seek redress for an injury by appealing to a court of justice, the early

settler of Tennessee or Kentucky would be very likely to take the law into his own hands. From this have come the vendettas, the street fighting, the lynch law, so conspicuous in the history of the nineteenth century. I am inclined to think that a chief cause of this difference between New England and the Southwest is to be found in a difference in the methods by which the two regions were settled. Rarely, if ever, in New England did individuals or families advance singly into the forest to make new homes for themselves. The migration was always a migration of organized communities. Town budded from town, as in ancient Greece; and the outermost town in the skirts of the wilderness carried with it, not only the strict discipline of church and schoolhouse, but also the whole apparatus of courts and judges, jails and constables, complete and efficient. This was the peculiar feature of the settlement of New England that saved it from the turbulence usually characteristic of frontier communities. When people can obtain justice, with reasonable certainty and promptness, at the hands of the law, they are not likely to be tempted to take the law into their own hands. The turbulence among our Western pioneers was only an ordinary instance of what happens on frontiers where for a time the bonds that hold together the complicated framework of society are somewhat loosened.

This hardy population, which thrust itself into all parts of the West, from the prairies of Illinois to the highlands of northern Alabama, was intensely American and intensely national in its feelings. These people differed from the planters of South Carolina or Louisiana almost as much as from the merchants and



yeomanry of New England and New York, and when by and by the stress of civil war came, they were the stout ligament that held the Union together. They were, in a certain measure, set free from the excessive attachment to a state government which was so liable to mislead the dweller in the older communities. The governments of the seaboard states were older than the federal Union; but the states west of the Alleghanies were created by the federal Union, and their people felt toward it a strong sense of allegiance. It was sufficient in 1861 to keep Missouri and Kentucky, with portions of Tennessee and Virginia, from joining the Southern Confederacy, which was thus seriously truncated and lamed at the very start.

These considerations will help us to understand the remarkable career of Andrew Jackson. His personal characteristics were in large measure the characteristics of the community in which he lived. There was the intense Americanism, the contempt for things foreign, the love for the Union, the iron tenacity of purpose, the promptness in redressing his own grievances, the earnest Puritan spirit. Some of these characteristics in Jackson, as in his neighbours, came naturally by inheritance. Of all the pugnacious and masterful, single-minded, conscientious, and obstinate Puritans that have ever lived in any country, the first place must doubtless be assigned to those Scotchmen and Yorkshiremen who went over to Ulster and settled there in the reign of James I. Perhaps it was the constant knocking against Irish Catholicism that hammered them out so hard. A good many of them came to America in the course of the eighteenth century, and among these was Andrew Jackson of Car-

rickfergus, son of Hugh Jackson, linen-draper. Andrew's wife was Elizabeth Hutchinson, and her family were linen-weavers. They came to America in 1765, the year of the Stamp Act, and before two years had passed Andrew Jackson died, only a few days before the birth of his famous son.


The log cabin in which the future President was born, on the 15th of March, 1767, was situated within a quarter of a mile of the boundary between the two Carolinas, and the people of the neighbourhood do not seem to have had a clear idea as to which province it belonged. In a letter of the 24th of December, 1830, in the proclamation addressed to the nullifiers in 1832, and again in his will, General Jackson speaks of himself as a native of South Carolina; but the evidence adduced by Parton seems to show that the birthplace may have been north of the border. Three weeks after the birth of her son, Mrs. Jackson moved to the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Crawford, just over the border in South Carolina, near the Waxhaw Creek, and there Andrew's early years were passed. His education, obtained in an "old-field school," consisted of little more than the "three R's," and even in that limited sphere his attainments were but scanty. His career as a fighter began early. In the spring and summer of 1780, after the disastrous surrender of Lincoln's army at Charleston, the whole of South Carolina was overrun by the British. On the 6th of August Jackson was present at Hanging Rock, when Sumter surprised and destroyed a British regiment. Two of his brothers, as well as his mother, died from hardships sustained in the war. In after years he could remember how he had been carried as

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prisoner to Camden and nearly starved there, and how a brutal officer had cut him with a sword because he refused to clean his boots; these reminiscences kept alive his hatred for the British, and doubtless gave unction to the tremendous blow that he dealt them at New Orleans. In 1781, left quite alone in the world, he was apprenticed for a while to a saddler. At one time he is said to have done a little teaching in an "old-field school." At the age of eighteen he entered the law office of Spruce McCay in Salisbury. While there he was said to have been "the most roaring, rollicking, game-cocking, horse-racing, card-playing, mischievous fellow" that had ever been seen in that town. Many and plentiful were the wild-oat crops sown at that time; and in such sort of agriculture young Jackson seems to have been more proficient than in the study of jurisprudence. But in that frontier society a small amount of legal knowledge went a good way, and in 1788 he was appointed public prosecutor for the western district of North Carolina, the district since erected into the state of Tennessee. The emigrant wagon train in which Jackson journeyed to Nashville carried news of the ratification of the federal Constitution by the requisite two-thirds of the states. He seems soon to have found business enough. In the April term of 1790, out of 192 cases on the dockets of the county court at Nashville, Jackson was employed as counsel in 42. In the year 1794, out of 397 cases he acted as counsel in 228, while at the same time he was practising his profession in the courts of other counties. The great number of these cases is an indication of their trivial character. As a general rule they were either actions growing out of


disputed land claims, or simple cases of assault and battery. Court day was a great occasion in that wild community, bringing crowds of men into the county town to exchange gossip, discuss politics, drink whiskey, and break heads. Probably each court day produced as many new cases as it settled. Amid such a turbulent population the public prosecutor must needs be a man of nerve and resource. Jackson proved himself quite equal to the task of introducing law and order, in so far as it depended on him. "Just inform Mr. Jackson," said Governor Blount, when sundry malfeasances were reported to him; "he will be sure to do his duty, and the offenders will be punished." Besides the lawlessness of the white pioneer population, there was the enmity of the Indians to be reckoned with. In the immediate neighbourhood of Nashville the Indians murdered on the average one person every ten days. From 1788 to 1795 Jackson performed the journey of nearly two hundred miles between Nashville and Jonesboro twenty-two times; and on these occasions there were many alarms from Indians which sometimes grew into quite a forest campaign. In one of these affairs, having nearly lost his life in an adventurous feat, Jackson is said to have made the characteristic remark, "A miss is as good as a mile; you see how near a man can graze danger." It was this wild experience that prepared the way for Jackson's eminence as an Indian fighter. In the autumn of 1794 the Cherokees were so thoroughly punished by General Robertson's famous Nickajack expedition that henceforth they thought it best to leave the Tennessee settlements in peace. With the rapid increase of the white population which soon followed, the community



became more prosperous and more orderly; and in the general prosperity Jackson had an ample share, partly through the diligent practice of his profession, partly through judicious purchase and sales of land.

With most men marriage is the most important event of life; in Jackson's career his marriage was peculiarly important. Rachel Donelson was a native of North Carolina, daughter of Colonel John Donelson, a Virginia surveyor in good circumstances, who in 1780 migrated to the neighbourhood of Nashville in a very remarkable boat journey of two thousand miles, down the Holston and Tennessee rivers, and up the Cumberland. During an expedition to Kentucky some time afterward, the blooming Rachel was wooed and won by Captain Lewis Robards. She was a sprightly girl, the best horsewoman and best dancer in that country; she was, moreover, a person of strong character, excellent heart, and most sincere piety; her husband was a young man of tyrannical and unreasonably jealous disposition. In Kentucky they lived with Mrs. Robards, the husband's mother; and, as was common in a new society where houses were too few and far between, there were other boarders in the family,—among them Judge Overton of Tennessee and a Mr. Stone. Presently Robards made complaints against his wife, in which he implicated Stone. He was even so abusive that his wife became an object of sympathy to the whole neighbourhood, and every one, including Captain Robards's own mother, condemned his behaviour. He had already quarrelled with his wife and sent her home to Nashville before Jackson became acquainted with her. Presently there was a reconciliation, and Robards came to live in Nashville.

The next object of his jealousy was Jackson. There is superabundant testimony that the conduct of the latter was quite above reproach. One of the most winsome features in Jackson's character was his sincere and chivalrous respect for women. He was also peculiarly susceptible to the feeling of keen sympathy for persons in distress. Robards presently left his wife and went to Kentucky, threatening by and by to return and make her life miserable. His temper was so ugly and his threats so atrocious that Mrs. Robards was frightened, and in order to get quite out of his way, she made up her mind to visit some friends at distant Natchez. In pursuance of this plan, with which the whole neighbourhood seems to have concurred, she went down the river in company with the venerable Colonel Stark and his family. As the Indians were just then on the war-path, Jackson accompanied the party with an armed escort, returning to Nashville as soon as he had seen his friends safely deposited at Natchez. While these things were going on, the proceedings of Captain Robards were characterized by a sort of Machiavellian astuteness. In 1791 Kentucky was still a part of Virginia, and according to the code of the Old Dominion, if a husband wished to obtain a divorce, he must procure an act of the legislature empowering him to bring his case before a jury, and authorizing a divorce conditionally upon the jury's finding the proper verdict. Early in 1791 Robards obtained the preliminary act of the legislature upon his declaration that his wife had run away with Jackson. He then deferred further action for more than two years. Meanwhile it was reported and believed in the West that a divorce had been granted;



probably Robards himself helped spread the report. Acting upon this information, Jackson, whose chivalrous interest in Mrs. Robards's misfortunes had ripened into sincere affection, went in the summer of 1791 to Natchez and married her there, and brought her to his home at Nashville. In the autumn of 1793 Captain Robards, on the strength of the facts which undeniably existed since the act of the Virginia legislature, brought his case into court and obtained the verdict completing the divorce. On hearing of this, to his intense surprise, in December, Jackson concluded that the best method of preventing future cavil was to procure a new license and have the marriage ceremony performed again; and this was done in January. Jackson was doubtless to blame for not taking more care to ascertain the import of the act of the Virginia legislature. It was a carelessness peculiarly striking in a lawyer. The irregularity of the marriage was indeed atoned by forty years of honourable and happy wedlock, ending only with Mrs. Jackson's death in December, 1828; and no blame was ever attached to the parties in Nashville, where all the circumstances were well known. But the story, half-understood, maliciously warped, and embellished with gratuitous fictions, grew into scandal as it was passed about among Jackson's personal enemies or political opponents; and herein some of the bitterest of his many quarrels had their source. His devotion to Mrs. Jackson was intense, and his loaded pistol was always kept ready for the rash man who should dare to speak of her slightly.

In January, 1796, we find Jackson sitting in the convention assembled at Knoxville for making a con-

stitution for Tennessee, and tradition has it that he proposed the name of the great crooked river as the name for the new state. Among the rules adopted by the convention, one is quaintly significant: "He that digresseth from the subject to fall on the person of any member shall be suppressed by the Speaker." The admission of Tennessee to the Union was effected in June, 1796, in spite of vehement opposition from the Federalists, and in the autumn Jackson was chosen as the single representative in Congress. Thus at the age of twenty-nine he received substantial proof of the high esteem in which he was held by his fellow-citizens. When the House had assembled, he heard President Washington deliver in person his last message to Congress. His first act as a representative was characteristic and prophetic; he was one of the twelve extreme Republicans who voted against the adoption of the address to Washington in approval of his administration. Jackson's two great objections to Washington's government were directed against Jay's treaty with Great Britain and Hamilton's national bank. His feeling toward the Jay treaty was that of a man who could not bear to see anything but blows dealt to Great Britain, and it was entirely in harmony with the fierce spirit of Americanism growing up behind the Alleghanies, which was by and by to drive the country into war. When one remembers the insolence of the British government in those years, in refusing to fulfil treaty obligations and surrender the northwestern fortresses, in trying to cut off our trade with the West Indies, in impressing our seamen, and in neglecting to send a minister to the United States, one thoroughly sympathizes with Jackson's feeling.

At the same time it is perfectly clear that Washington was right in insisting upon the ratification of the Jay treaty. It did not give us much satisfaction, but at that moment, and until our new government should have become firmly established, anything was better than war. A good commentary on the soundness of Washington's conduct was to be found in the fact that the British were almost as much disgusted with the treaty as we were. When war was at length declared, in 1812, Lord Sheffield said they would now be revenged upon the Yankees for the concessions extorted by Jay. That it did not turn out so was partly due to the valour of the young man who now sat chafing at Washington's moderation. Jackson's other objection shows that even at that early day he felt that banking is not a part of the legitimate business of government. The year 1797 was a season of financial depression, and the general paralysis of business was ascribed — perhaps too exclusively — to the overissue of notes by the national bank. Jackson's antipathy to that institution was nourished by what he saw and heard at Philadelphia. Of his other votes in this Congress, one was for an appropriation to defray the expenses of Sevier's expedition against the Cherokees, which was carried; three others were eminently wise and characteristic of the man:—


1. For finishing the three frigates then building, and destined to such imperishable renown, the *Constitution*, *Constellation*, and *United States*.

2. Against the further payment of blackmail to Algiers.

3. Against removing "the restriction which con-

financed the expenditure of public money to the specific objects for which each sum was appropriated."

Three such votes as that, in one Congress, make a noble record. Another vote, foolish in itself, was characteristic of a representative from the backwoods. It was against the presumed extravagance of appropriating \$14,000 to buy furniture for the newly built White House. Jackson's course throughout was warmly approved by his constituents, and in the following summer he was chosen to fill a vacancy in the federal Senate. Of his conduct as senator little is known beyond the remark made by Jefferson in 1824 to Daniel Webster, that he had often, when presiding in the Senate, seen the passionate Jackson get up to speak and then choke with rage so that he could not utter a word. One need not wonder at this if one remembers what was the subject most frequently brought up for discussion in the Senate during the winter of 1797-1798. The outrageous insolence of the French Directory was enough to arouse the wrath of a far tamer and less patriotic spirit than Jackson's. It is almost enough to make one choke with rage now, in reading about it after one hundred years. At any rate it is enough to make one rejoice that, although war was never declared, the gallant Truxton did, presently, in two well-fought naval battles, inflict crushing and galling defeat upon the haughty tricolour. Those were the days when the new nation in America was deemed so weak that anybody might insult it with impunity, and France and England vied with each other in bullying and teasing us. Under such treatment it was hard to maintain prudence. Wash-





ington seriously risked his popularity by averting a quarrel with England in 1794; Adams sacrificed his chances for reëlection by refusing to go to war with France in 1799. The effect of all this must be borne in mind if we would appreciate the immense and well-earned popularity which Jackson acquired when the time had come to strike back.

In April, 1798, Jackson resigned his seat in the Senate, and was appointed judge in the Supreme Court of Tennessee. He retained this position for six years, but nothing is known of his decisions, as the practice of recording decisions began only with his successor, Judge Overton. During this period he was much harassed by business troubles arising from the decline in the value of land consequent upon the financial crisis of 1798. At length, in 1804, he resigned his judgeship in order to devote his attention exclusively to his private affairs. He paid up all his debts and engaged extensively both in planting and in trade. He was noted for fair and honourable dealing, his credit was always excellent, and a note with his name on it was considered as good as gold. He had a clear head for business, and was never led astray by the delusions about paper money by which American communities have so often been infested. His plantation was well managed, and his slaves were always kindly and considerately treated.

But while genial and kind in disposition, he was by no means a person with whom it was safe to take liberties. In 1795 he fought a duel with Avery, an opposing counsel, over some hasty words that had passed in the court-room. Next year he quarrelled with John Sevier, the famous governor of Tennessee,

and came near shooting him "at sight." Sevier had alluded to the circumstances of his marriage. Ten years afterward, for a similar offence, though complicated with other matters in the course of a long quarrel, he fought a duel with Charles Dickinson, a young lawyer of Nashville. The circumstances were such as to show Jackson's wonderful nerve and rare skill in grazing danger. Each man meant to kill the other, and Dickinson was called the most unerring marksman in all that country. It is said that on the way to the place of meeting, as Dickinson and his friends stopped at a tavern for lunch, he amused himself by severing a string with his bullet, and pointing to the hanging remnant, said to the landlord as he rode away, "If Andrew Jackson comes along this road, show him that!" It was in much more serious mood that Jackson, as he made the journey, discussed with Overton, his second, the proper course to pursue. It was decided that, as Dickinson would surely have the advantage in a quick shot, it would be best to let him fire first, and then take deliberate aim at him. When all had arrived upon the ground, at the given signal Dickinson instantly fired. It has been thought that his aim may have been slightly misled by Jackson's extreme slenderness and the loose fit of his coat. Instead of piercing his heart, the ball broke the rib close by and made an ugly wound, which, however, no one observed. It was a moment of sore astonishment for Dickinson when he saw his grim adversary still standing before him. Jackson's trigger had stopped at half cock, but he skilfully raised it into position again, and at his fire Dickinson fell mortally wounded. It was not until they had gone more than

a hundred yards away from the spot that Jackson opened his coat and disclosed his wound, whereat Overton expressed the greatest surprise that, after such a hurt, he should have been able to remain standing and return his adversary's fire. In Jackson's reply there was a touch of hyperbole. "By the Eternal," said he, "I would have killed him if he had shot me through the brain." The unfortunate Dickinson died that night, cursing his fate and unspeakably chagrined by the belief that he had not hit his enemy. Perhaps it would have consoled him somewhat if he could have known that, after nearly forty years and in a ripe old age, the death of Andrew Jackson was to be caused by the wound received that morning. Such incidents are far from pleasant to tell; indeed, they are revolting in the extreme. But perhaps nothing could better illustrate the unconquerable spirit that carried Jackson through every kind of vicissitude.

About this time Jackson was visited by Aaron Burr, who was then preparing his mysterious Southwestern expedition. Since 1801 Jackson had been commander-in-chief of the Tennessee militia, and Burr seems to have wished, if possible, to make use of his influence in raising troops, but without indicating the purpose for which they were wanted. In this he was unsuccessful. Jackson was not the man to be used as a cat's paw, but he seems to have regarded the charge of treason afterward brought against Burr as ill-founded. At Richmond, while Burr's trial was going on, Jackson made a speech reflecting upon Jefferson, and thus made himself obnoxious to Madison, who was then Secretary of State. Afterward, in 1808, he declared his preference for Monroe over Madison as candidate for

the presidency. He was considered unfriendly to Madison's administration, but this did not prevent him from offering his services, with those of twenty-five hundred men, as soon as war was declared against Great Britain in 1812. Late in that year, after the disasters in the Northwest, it was feared that the British might make an attempt upon New Orleans, and Jackson was ordered down to Natchez at the head of two thousand men. He went in high spirits, promising to plant the American eagle upon the ramparts of Mobile, Pensacola, and St. Augustine, if so directed. On the 6th of February, as it had become evident that the British were not meditating a southward expedition, the new Secretary of War Armstrong sent word to Jackson to disband his troops. This stupid order reached the general at Natchez toward the end of March, and inflamed his wrath. He took upon himself the responsibility of marching his men home in a body, an act in which the government afterward acquiesced, and reimbursed Jackson for the expense involved. During this march Jackson became the idol of his troops, and his sturdiness won him the nickname of "Old Hickory," by which he was affectionately known among his friends and followers for the rest of his life.

It was early in September, 1813, shortly after his return to Nashville, that the affray occurred with Thomas Benton, growing out of an unusually silly duel in which Jackson, with more good nature than discretion, had acted as second to the antagonist of Benton's brother. The case was one which a few calm words of personal explanation might easily have adjusted. But the facts got misrepresented, and both men lost their tempers before arriving at correct views

of the matter. In a tavern at Nashville Jackson undertook to horsewhip Benton, and in the ensuing scuffle the latter was pitched downstairs, while Jackson got a bullet in the left shoulder which he carried for more than twenty years. Jackson and Benton had been warm friends. After this affair they did not meet again until 1823, when both were in the United States Senate. They were both as frank and generous as they were impulsive, and soon became fast friends again. There is an amusing side to the primitive Homeric boisterousness of such scenes among grown-up men of high station in life. In the early part of this century, though quite characteristic of the Southwest, it was not confined to that part of the country. It was not so many years since two congressmen, Matthew Lyon of Vermont and Roger Griswold of Connecticut, had rolled on the floor of the House of Representatives, cuffing and pounding each other like angry schoolboys.

The war with Great Britain was complicated with an Indian war which could not in any case have been avoided. The westward progress of the white settlers toward the Mississippi River was gradually driving the red man from his hunting-grounds; and the celebrated Tecumseh had formed a scheme, quite similar to that of Pontiac fifty years earlier, of uniting all the tribes between Florida and the Great Lakes in a grand attempt to drive back the white men. This scheme was partially frustrated in the autumn of 1811, while Tecumseh was preaching his crusade among the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles. During his absence his brother, known as the Prophet, attacked General Harrison at Tippecanoe and was overwhelmingly defeated.

The war with Great Britain renewed Tecumseh's opportunity, and his services to the enemy were extremely valuable until his death in the battle of the Thames. Tecumseh's principal ally in the South was a half-breed Creek chieftain named Weathersford. On the shore of Lake Tensaw, in the southern part of what is now Alabama, was a stockaded fortress known as Fort Mimms; there many of the settlers had taken refuge. On the 30th of August, 1813, this stronghold was surprised by Weathersford at the head of one thousand Creek warriors, and more than four hundred men, women, and children were most atrociously massacred. The news of this dreadful affair aroused the people of the Southwest to vengeance; men and money were raised by the state of Tennessee; and, before he had fully recovered from the wound received in the Benton affray, Jackson took the field at the head of twenty-five hundred men. Now for the first time he had a chance to show his wonderful military capacity, his sleepless vigilance, untiring patience, and unrivalled talent as a leader of men. The difficulties encountered were formidable in the extreme. In that frontier wilderness the business of the commissariat was naturally ill managed, and the men, who under the most favourable circumstances had little idea of military subordination, were part of the time mutinous from hunger. More than once Jackson was obliged to use one-half of his army to keep the other half from disbanding. In view of these difficulties the celerity of his movements and the force with which he struck the enemy were truly marvellous. The Indians were badly defeated at Tallasahatchee and Talladega. At length, on the 27th of March, 1814, having been reënforced by a regiment

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of United States infantry, Jackson struck the decisive blow at Tohopeka, otherwise known as the Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River. In this bloody battle no quarter was given, and the strength of the Creek nation was finally broken. Jackson pursued the remnant to their place of refuge, called the Holy Ground, upon which the medicine men had declared that no white man could set foot and live. Such of the Creek chieftains as had not fled to Florida now surrendered. The American soldiers were ready to kill Weathersford in revenge for Fort Mimms, but the magnanimous Jackson spared his life and treated him so well that henceforth he and his people remained on good terms with the white men. Among the officers who served under Jackson in this remarkable campaign were the two picturesque men who in later years played such an important part in the history of the Southwest, — Samuel Houston and David Crockett. The Creek War was one of critical importance. It was the last occasion on which the red men could put forth sufficient power to embarrass the United States government. More than any other single battle, that of Tohopeka marks the downfall of Indian power on this continent. Its immediate effects upon the war with Great Britain were very great. By destroying the only hostile power within the Southwestern territory, it made it possible to concentrate the military force of the border states upon any point, however remote, that might be threatened by the British. More specifically, it made possible the great victory at New Orleans. Throughout the whole of this campaign, in which Jackson showed such indomitable energy, he was suffering from illness such as would have kept

any ordinary man groaning in bed, besides that for most of the time his left arm had to be supported in a sling. His pluck was equalled by his thoroughness. Many generals after victory are inclined to relax their efforts; not so Jackson, who followed up every success with furious persistence, and whose admirable maxim was that in war "until all is done nothing is done."

On the 31st of May, 1814, Jackson was made major-general in the regular army, and was appointed to command the Department of the South. It was then a matter of dispute whether Mobile belonged to Spain or to the United States. In August Jackson occupied the town and made his headquarters there. With the consent of Spain the British were using Florida as a base of operations, and had established themselves at Pensacola. Jackson wrote to Washington for permission to attack them there, but the government was loath to sanction an invasion of Spanish territory until the complicity of Spain with our enemy should be proved beyond cavil. The letter from Secretary Armstrong to this effect did not reach Jackson. The capture of Washington by the British prevented his receiving orders and left him to act upon his own responsibility, a kind of situation from which he was never known to flinch. On September 14 the British advanced against Mobile, but in their attack upon the outwork, Fort Bowyer, they met with a disastrous repulse. They retreated to Pensacola, whither Jackson followed them with three thousand men. On the 7th of November he stormed that town. His next move would have been against Fort Barrancas, six miles distant, at the mouth of the harbour.

By capturing this post he would have entrapped the

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British fleet and might have compelled it to surrender; but the enemy forestalled him by blowing up the fort and beating a precipitate retreat. For thus driving the British from Florida, a most necessary and useful act, Jackson was stupidly and maliciously blamed by the Federalist newspapers. After clearing the enemy away from this quarter, he found himself free to devote all his energies to the task of defending New Orleans; and there, after an arduous journey, he arrived on the 2d of December. The British expedition directed against that city was much more formidable than any other that we had to encounter during that war; and, moreover, its purpose was much more deadly. In the North the British warfare had been directed chiefly toward defending Canada and gaining such a foothold upon our frontier as might be useful in making terms at the end of the war. The burning of Washington was an exasperating insult, but its military importance was very slight. But the expedition against New Orleans was intended to make a permanent conquest of the lower Mississippi, and to secure for Great Britain in perpetuity the western bank of the river. Napoleon had sold us the vast Louisiana territory in order to keep Great Britain from seizing it. As part of his empire it was a vulnerable spot which the mistress of the seas could strike with impunity so far as he was concerned. He preferred to put it into the hands of a power which was at that time hostile toward Great Britain. But the latter power felt quite competent to take it away from Napoleon's ally, and as the emperor had just been dethroned and sent to Elba, the whole strength of England, if needed, could be put forth against the United States. The war had now lasted more than

two years, and in spite of our glorious naval victories, the American arms upon land had made but little headway as against the British. For constructive statesmanship Mr. Madison's abilities were of the highest order, but as President he had shown himself unequal to the task of conducting a war. At the outset the Americans had entertained hopes of conquering Canada, but we had begun with serious defeats and losses, and at length, after several brilliant victories, had done little more than to ward off invasion at the two gateways of Niagara and Lake Champlain. In New England the British had seized and held the wilderness east of the Penobscot, creating quite a panic throughout that part of the country. The leaders of the old Federalist party in New England were factious and disloyal, and in this very month of December, 1814, there was assembled at Hartford a convention which adopted measures looking toward a possible dissolution of the Union. The national finances were in a state of collapse, and nearly all the banks in the Middle and Southern states had suspended specie payments. The British government assumed a tone of more than ordinary arrogance. It was going to demand a high price for peace: the eastern half of Maine, at any rate, and the Michigan territory, and perhaps yet more of the Northwest; and the Americans must promise not to keep any more armed vessels upon the lakes, which must have sounded queer to Perry and Macdonough. Then, with the western bank of the Mississippi secured, Great Britain could hem in the United States, as France had once hemmed in the colonies; Canada and Louisiana could be made to join hands again. In order to effect all this, it seemed necessary to inflict

upon the Americans one crushing and humiliating defeat, — such a defeat, for instance, as the French had lately suffered at Vitoria. That this could be done few Englishmen doubted, and so confident was the expectation of victory that governors and commanders for the towns along the Mississippi River were actually appointed and sent out in the fleet! The situation, so far as British intentions went, was thus extremely threatening. Even had nothing of all this been accomplished beyond the conquest of New Orleans, when we remember what annoyance so weak a nation as Spain had been able to inflict upon us during the twenty years preceding 1803, we can imagine how insufferable it would have been had the mouth of the Mississippi passed under the control of the greatest naval power in the world.

When Jackson rode into New Orleans on the 2d of December, 1814, he was so worn out by disease and so jaded by his long journey in the saddle that the fittest place for him was the hospital, and almost any other man would have gone there. But in the hawklike glare of his eye there shone forth a spirit as indomitable as ever dwelt in human frame. His activity during the following weeks was well-nigh incredible. There was one time when he is said to have gone five days and four nights without sleep. Before his arrival there was dire confusion and consternation, but his energy soon restored order, and there was something in his manner that inspired confidence. He never for a moment admitted the possibility of defeat, he never doubted, fumbled, or hesitated, but always saw at a glance the end to be reached, and went straight toward it without losing a moment. At first it rather

took people's breath away when upon his own responsibility he put the city under martial law. But an autocrat upon whom so much reliance was placed found ready obedience, and the strictest discipline was maintained. Women are apt to be quick in recognizing the true hero, and from the outset all the women of New Orleans had faith in Jackson. His stately demeanour and graceful politeness were much admired. On the day of his arrival Edward Livingston, who was now to be his aide-de-camp, invited him home to dinner. The beautiful Mrs. Livingston was then the leader of fashionable society in New Orleans. That day she had a dozen young ladies to dinner, and just as they were about to sit down there came the startling news that General Jackson was on his way to join the party. There was anxious curiosity as to how the uncouth queller of Indians would look and behave. When he entered the room, tall and stately in his uniform of blue cloth and yellow buckskin, all were amazed at his courtly manners. and it was not long before all were charmed with his pleasant and kindly talk. After dinner he had no sooner left the house than the young ladies in chorus exclaimed to Mrs. Livingston: "*Is this* your backwoodsman? Why, madam, he is a prince!"<sup>1</sup> Many years afterward Josiah Quincy, member of a committee for receiving President Jackson on his visit to Boston, was in like manner astonished at his urbanity and grace. He had the dignity that goes with entire simplicity of nature, and the ease that comes from unconsciousness of self.

One of Jackson's latest biographers observes that in this campaign everything fell out favourably for him,

<sup>1</sup> Parton, II. 31.

"as if by magic."<sup>1</sup> But if there was any magic in the case, it lay in the bold initiative by which he got the game into his own hands and kept it there. As soon as he heard of the landing of the British, he went forth to attack them, rightly believing that their ignorance of the country might be set off against their superb discipline. He made a spirited night attack upon their camp, while from the river the heavy guns of the schooner *Carolina* raked them with distressing charges of grape. The effect was to check the enemy's progress and give Jackson time to complete his intrenchments in a very strong position which he had chosen, near the Bienvenue and Chalmette plantations, on the east side of the river. On the farther side he placed the militia of Kentucky and Louisiana, under General Morgan. The British numbered twelve thousand men under command of Wellington's brother-in-law, the gallant Sir Edward Pakenham. To oppose these veterans of the Spanish peninsula, Jackson had six thousand of that sturdy race whose fathers had vanquished Ferguson at King's Mountain, and whose children so nearly vanquished Grant at Shiloh. On the 8th of January Pakenham was unwise enough to try to overwhelm his adversary by a direct assault all along the line. It was repeating Bunker Hill and anticipating Cold Harbor. On the west bank, indeed, the British weight of numbers prevailed, pushed the militia out of the way, and seemed to open a chance for turning Jackson's position. But all this was rendered futile by the stupendous catastrophe on the eastern bank. "Don't waste any shots, boys," said Jackson, as the long lines of redcoats were seen approaching, "make

<sup>1</sup> Sumner, 39.

every shot tell; we must finish this business to-day, you know." We may well believe that these faultless marksmen, who thought nothing of bringing down a squirrel from the top of the tallest tree, wasted very few shots indeed. In just twenty-five minutes the British were in full retreat, leaving twenty-six hundred of their number killed and wounded. "The field," said an officer, "was so thickly strewn with the dead, that from the American ditch you could have walked forward for a quarter of a mile on the bodies." "In some places whole platoons lay together, as if killed by the same discharge."<sup>1</sup> Without a sound of exultation the Americans looked on the dreadful scene in melancholy silence, and presently detachments of them were busy in assuaging the thirst and bathing the wounds of those in whom life was left. Among the slain was Pakenham himself. The American loss was only eight killed and thirteen wounded, because the enemy were mown down too quickly to return an effective fire. Never, perhaps, in the history of the world, has a battle been fought between armies of civilized men with so great a disparity of loss. It was also the most complete and overwhelming defeat that any English army has ever experienced. It outdid even Bannockburn. News travelled so slowly then that this great victory, like the three last naval victories of the war, occurred after peace had been made by the commissioners at Ghent. Nevertheless, no American can regret that the battle was fought. Not only the insolence and rapacity of Great Britain had richly deserved such castigation, but if she had once gained a foothold in the Mississippi Valley, it might have taken an armed

<sup>1</sup> Parton, II. 209.

force to dislodge her, in spite of the treaty; for in the matter of the western frontier posts after 1783 she had by no means acted in good faith. Jackson's victory decided that henceforth the Mississippi Valley belonged indisputably to the people of the United States. It was the recollection of that victory, along with the exploits of Hull and Decatur, Perry and Macdonough, which caused the Holy Alliance to look upon the Monroe Doctrine as something more than an idle threat. All over the United States the immediate effect of the news was electric; and it was enhanced by the news of peace which arrived a few days later. By this "almost incredible victory," as the *National Intelligencer* called it, the credit of the American arms, upon land, was fully restored. Not only did the administration glory in it, as was natural, but the opposition lauded it for a different reason, as an example of what American military heroism could do in spite of inadequate support from government. Thus praised by all parties, Jackson, who before the Creek War had been little known outside of Tennessee, became at once the foremost man in the United States. People in the North, while throwing up their hats for him, were sometimes heard to ask: "Who is this General Jackson? To what state does he belong?" Henceforth, until the Civil War, he occupied the most prominent place in the popular mind.

After his victory Jackson remained three months in New Orleans, in some conflict with the civil authorities of the town, which he found it necessary to hold under martial law. In April he returned to Nashville, still retaining his military command of the Southwest. He soon became involved in a quarrel

with Mr. Crawford, the Secretary of War, who had undertaken to modify some provisions in his treaty with the Creeks. Jackson was also justly incensed by the occasional issue of orders from the War Department directly to his subordinate officers; such orders sometimes stupidly thwarted his plans. The usual course for a commanding general thus annoyed would be to make a private representation to the government. But here, as ordinarily, while quite right in his position, Jackson was violent and overbearing in his methods. He published, April 22, 1817, an order forbidding his subordinate officers to pay heed to any order from the War Department unless issued through him. Mr. Calhoun, who in October succeeded Crawford as Secretary of War, gracefully yielded the point, but the public had meanwhile been somewhat scandalized by the collision of authorities. In private conversation General Scott had alluded to Jackson's conduct as savouring of mutiny. This led to an angry correspondence between the two generals, ending in a challenge from Jackson, which Scott declined on the ground that duelling is a wicked and unchristian custom.

Affairs in Florida now demanded attention. That country had become a nest of outlaws, and chaos reigned supreme there. Many of the defeated Creeks had found a refuge in Florida; and runaway negroes from the plantations of Georgia and South Carolina were continually escaping thither. During the late war British officers and adventurers, acting on their own responsibility upon this neutral soil, committed many acts which their government would never have sanctioned. They stirred up Indians and negroes to



commit atrocities on the United States frontier. The Spanish government was at that time engaged in warfare with its revolted colonies in South America, and the coasts of Florida became a haunt for contraband traders, privateers, and filibusters. One adventurer would announce his intention to make Florida a free republic; another would go about committing robbery on his own account; a third would set up an agency for kidnapping negroes on speculation. The disorder was hideous. On the Apalachicola River the British had built a fort, and amply stocked it with arms and ammunition, to serve as a base of operations against the United States. On the departure of the British, the fort was seized and held by negroes. This alarmed the people of Georgia, and in July, 1816, United States troops, with permission from the Spanish authorities, marched in and bombarded the negro fort. A hot shot found its way into the magazine, three hundred negroes were blown into fragments, and the fort was demolished. In this case the Spaniards were ready to leave to United States troops a disagreeable work for which their own force was incompetent. Every day made it plainer that Spain was quite unable to preserve order in Florida, and for this reason the United States entered upon negotiations for the purchase of that country. Meanwhile the turmoil increased. White men were murdered by Indians, and United States troops under Colonel Twiggs captured and burned a considerable Seminole village known as Fowltown. The Indians retaliated by a wholesale massacre of fifty people who were ascending the Apalachicola River in boats; some of the victims were tortured with firebrands. Jackson

was now ordered to the frontier. He wrote at once to President Monroe, "Let it be signified to me through any channel (say Mr. John Rhea) that the possession of the Floridas would be desirable to the United States, and in sixty days it will be accomplished." Mr. Rhea was a representative from Tennessee, a confidential friend of both Jackson and Monroe. The President was ill when Jackson's letter reached him, and does not seem to have given it due consideration. On referring to it a year later he could not remember that he had ever seen it before. Rhea, however, seems to have written a letter to Jackson, telling him that the President approved of his suggestion. As to this point the united testimony of Jackson, Rhea, and Judge Overton seems conclusive. Afterward Mr. Monroe, through Rhea, seems to have requested Jackson to burn this letter, and an entry on the general's letter-book shows that it was accordingly burnt, April 12, 1819. There can be no doubt that, whatever the President's intention may have been, or how far it may have been correctly interpreted by Rhea, the general honestly considered himself authorized to take possession of Florida on the ground that the Spanish government had shown itself incompetent to prevent the denizens of that country from engaging in hostilities against the United States. Jackson acted upon this belief with his accustomed promptness. He raised troops in Tennessee and neighbouring states, invaded Florida in March, 1818, captured St. Mark's, and pushed on to the Seminole headquarters on the Suwanee River. In less than three months from this time he had overthrown the Indians and brought order out of chaos. His measures were

praised by his friends as vigorous, while his enemies stigmatized them as high-handed. In one instance his conduct was certainly open to question. At St. Mark's his troops captured an aged Scotch trader and friend of the Indians, named Alexander Arbuthnot; near Suwanee, some time afterward, they seized Robert Ambrister, a young English lieutenant of marines, nephew of the governor of New Providence. Jackson believed that these men had incited the Indians to make war upon the United States and were now engaged in aiding and abetting them in their hostilities. They were tried by a court-martial at St. Mark's. On evidence which surely does not to-day seem fully conclusive, Arbuthnot was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Appearances were more strongly against Ambrister. He did not make it clear what his business was in Florida, and threw himself upon the mercy of the court, which at first condemned him to be shot, but on further consideration commuted the sentence to fifty lashes and a year's imprisonment. Jackson arbitrarily revived the first sentence, and Ambrister was accordingly shot. A few minutes afterward Arbuthnot was hanged from the yard-arm of his own ship, declaring with his last breath that his country would avenge him. In this affair Jackson unquestionably acted from a stern sense of duty; as he himself said, "My God would not have smiled on me had I punished only the poor, ignorant savages, and spared the white men who set them on." Here, as on some other occasions, however, when under the influence of strong feeling, it may be doubted if he was to the full extent capable of estimating evidence. It is, however, very probable that the men were guilty.

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On his way home, hearing that some Indians had sought refuge in Pensacola, Jackson captured the town, turned out the Spanish governor, and left a garrison of his own there. He had now virtually conquered Florida, but he had moved rather too fast for the government at Washington. He had gone further, perhaps, than was permissible in trespassing upon neutral territory; and his summary execution of two British subjects aroused furious excitement in England. For a moment we seemed on the verge of war with Great Britain and Spain at once. Whatever authority President Monroe may have intended, through the Rhea letter, to confer upon Jackson, he certainly felt that the general had gone too far. With one exception all his cabinet agreed with him that it would be best to disavow Jackson's acts and make reparation for them. But John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, was in point of boldness not unlike Jackson. He felt equal to the task of dealing with the two foreign powers, and upon his advice the administration decided to assume the responsibility for what Jackson had done. Pensacola and St. Mark's were restored to Spain, and an order of Jackson's for the seizing of St. Augustine was countermanded by the President. But Adams represented to Spain that the American general, in his invasion of Florida, was virtually assisting the Spanish government in maintaining order there; and to Great Britain he justified the execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister on the ground that their conduct had been such that they had forfeited their allegiance and become virtual outlaws. Spain and Great Britain accepted the explanations; had either nation felt in the mood for war with

the United States, it might have been otherwise. As soon as the administration had adopted Jackson's measures, they were for that reason attacked in Congress by Clay, whose opposition was at this time factious, and this was the beginning of the bitter and lifelong feud between Jackson and Clay. In 1819 the purchase of Florida from Spain was effected, and in 1821 Jackson was appointed governor of that territory.

The victorious general was now in his fifty-fifth year. Until the age of forty-five he had been little known outside of Tennessee. It was then that the Creek War gave him his opportunity, and revealed the fact that there was a great general among us. Since the battle of New Orleans he had come to be as much a hero in America as Wellington in England. The Iron Duke was never once defeated in battle, but if he had ever come to blows with Old Hickory, I do not feel absolutely sure that the record might not have been broken. Jackson's boldness and tenacity were combined with a fertility in resources that made him, like Boots in the fairy tales, everywhere invincible. Alike in war and in politics we already begin to see him always carrying the day. One can see that the election of such a man to the presidency would be likely to mark an era in American history. One sees in Jackson a representative man. His virtues and his faults were largely those of the frontier society that in those days lived west of the Alleghanies. His election to the presidency was the first great political triumph of that Western country which Gouverneur Morris wished to see always kept in leading-strings. The significance of this triumph I shall try to point out in my next paper.

## NOTE. AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ANDREW JACKSON.

Through the courtesy of the late Colonel Thomas Tasker Gantt of St. Louis, Missouri, Dr. Fiske's attention was directed to an unpublished letter of Jackson's, written by the general in 1818 to his friend, the Hon. G. W. Campbell, minister to Russia, concerning affairs in Florida. Dr. Fiske made an exact copy, which is given below, an interesting example, not only of the writer's virility of expression, but of his well-known peculiarities of spelling. Of these peculiarities General Jackson was himself well aware. That he was also drolly indifferent to all conventional rules of orthography appears from an extract of correspondence between Colonel Gantt and Mrs. Elizabeth B. Lee, daughter of the distinguished Virginian, Francis P. Blair, and sister to Montgomery Blair of Lincoln's cabinet. From the lifelong intimacy of the Blairs and the Jacksons, Mrs. Lee was often, as a girl, a guest at "The Hermitage" and at the White House. "Once," she writes, "when copying a letter for him I protested against his spelling *which* three different ways on one page and wanted him to alter it, but he would not, and said laughingly that he could make himself understood, and that as I was a copyist, I had better spell it as I found it; then he added, more seriously, that at the age when most young people learn to spell he was working for his living and helping the best of mothers."

Chekesaw Nation Treaty Ground,  
Oct<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1818.

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I know you will be astonished at receiving an answer to your very friendly letter of the 22<sup>d</sup> July last at this distant day and from this place. Your letter came to hand by due course of mail, but found me sick in bed — that I could not comply with your request or my own wishes by giving it a speedy answer. It was some time before I recovered so as to use a pen, and when I did, I found myself surrounded by letters and communications relative to my official duties that occupied my whole time that I was able to attend to business untill the arrival of Governor Shelby of Kentucky with whom I was joined in commission to hold a treaty with this nation for a surrender of their right to all lands within

the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. We arrived here on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. and found everything wrong: an agent unacquainted with Indians, the geography of the country, or even what was the wishes of the government, and not half the nation notified of the time or place of meeting. Runners have gone to all parts of the nation to collect them: we are waiting their arrival and I am thereby afforded a leisure moment to answer your friendly letter.

It affords me much pleasure to see the polite attention of the eastern people towards you. This shows a spirit of harmony towards the southern and western people that I hope will grow into permanent harmony between the two interests, and that violence of party spirit and bickering will cease to exist in our happy country.

On the subject of my taking Pensacola I regret that the Government had not furnished you with a copy of my report from Fts Gadsden and Montgomery. This would have given you a full view of the whole ground. You are advised of the situation of our southern frontier when I was ordered to take the field and put a speedy end to the conflict with the Seminoles, &c., &c. Our frontier when I reached it was reeking with the blood of our women and children and the massacre of Lt. Scott. When I reached Ft. Scott I found it out of supplies and no alternative left me but to abandon the campaign, or to force my way to the bay of Appalachicola and risk meeting supplies I had ordered from N. Orleans. I chose the latter—and succeeded. Having obtained eight days rations for my men I immediately marched on Muckasookey, where the strength of the enemy was collected, first apprising the Governor of Pensacola why I had entered the Floridas, to wit, not as the enemy but as the friend of Spain; as Spain had acknowledged her incapacity, through her weakness to control the Indians within her territory and keep them at peace with the United States, self-defence justified our entering her territory and doing that for her which she had bound herself to do by solem treaty—that as I was engaged fighting the battles of Spain I had a right and did calculate on receiving all the facilities in the power of the agents of Spain that would aid me in putting a speedy end to the war; advising the Governor in the same letter that I had ordered supplies up the                      for my army to Ft Crawford, which I trusted would be permitted to pass unmolested

without any delay occasioned by the agents of Spain, but should I be disappointed in my expectation of the friendly dispositions of the agents of Spain, or should my supplies be interrupted by them, I SHOULD VIEW IT AS AN ACT OF WAR AND TREAT IT ACCORDINGLY. I received in answer to this friendly letter a positive declaration that my provisions should not pass; the supplies were by the Governor seized at Pensacola under a demand of transit duties, and my whole army thereby made subject to starvation, and which I never got until I entered Pensacola. I proceeded against Muckasookey, routed and dispersed the enemy, taking some prisoners from whom I learned that the Indians received all their supplies of ammunition from Ft Marks thirty miles distant, and that the noted and notorious Francis the prophet and his party had retired to St. Marks with all his booty taken from Ft Scott; and Inchqueen and his party had retired there also — that the ballance of the Indians had fled to the negroes on the Sewanney [Suwanee] river. I was also informed by the Governor of Pensacola, through captains Call and Gordon, that he expected Ft Marks was in the hands of the Indians and negroes, as they had made demand of large supplies which the commander was not able to comply with, and he was unable to defend the fort. As soon as I had collected the corn and cattle for the supply of my troops, I marched on Ft Marks — when I reached there I found that Francis and party had been in the fort, that the garrison had been supplied with the cattle stolen from our frontier, that our public stores were the granaries of our enemy, and that the Indians had been supplied with all of munitions of war by the commandant — and that the notorious Arbuthnot was then in the garrison. I demanded possession of the garrison to be possessed by my troops during the war, and untill Spain could reinforce it with as many troops as would insure the safety of our frontier and a fulfillment of the treaty with the U States on the part of Spain. This was refused me. I saw across St. Marks river the smoke of my enemy; delay was out of the question. I seized Arbuthnot in the garrison and took possession of it. The noted Francis, who had just returned with a brigadier general's commission, a good rifle and snuff-box presented by the Prince Regent, had been captured the day before with four of his followers by Capt. McKeever whose vessell they had visitted, mistaking it for a vessell expected from



England with supplies for the Indians, as he stated. I ordered him this principle chief to be hung, and marched the next day for Sewanney, where I routed the Indians and negroes, took Ambrister, a British officer who headed the negroes, Arbuthnot's schooner with all their papers, which led to the conviction and execution of Arbuthnot and Capt. Ambrister, both of whom was executed under sentence of a court-martial at Ft. Marks. I returned to Ft Gadsden, where preparing to disband the militia force I rec<sup>d</sup> information that four hundred and fifty Indians had collected in Pensacola, was fed by the Governor, and a party furnished by the governor had issued forth and in one night slaughtered eighteen of our citizens, and that another party had, with the knowledge of the governor, and being furnished by him, went out publicly, murdered a Mr. Stokes and family, and had in open day returned to Pensacola and sold the booty, amongst which was the clothing of Mr. Stokes. This statement was corroborated by a report of Gov. Bibb. I was also informed that the provisions I had ordered for the supply of Ft Crawford and my army on board the U. States schooner Amelia was seized and detained at Pensacola with a small detachment of regulars and six hundred Tennesseans. I marched for Pensacola; whilst on my march thither I was met by a protest of the governor of Pensacola, ordering me out of the Floridas, or he would oppose force to force and drive me out of the territory of Spain. This bold measure of the governor, who had alleged weakness as the cause of his non-fulfillment of the treaty with the U. States, when united with the facts stated, of which I then had positive proof—that at that time a large number of the hostile Indians were then in Pensacola, who I had dispersed east of the Appalachicola—unmasked the duplicity of the governor and his having aided and abetted the Indians in the war against us. I hastened my steps, entered Pensacola, took possession of my supplies. The governor had fled from the city to the Barancas, where he had strongly fortified himself. I demanded possession of the garrison to be held by American troops until a guarantee should be given for the fulfillment of the treaty and the safety of the frontier. This was denied. I approached the Barancas with one 9<sup>lb</sup> piece and 5  $\frac{8}{16}$  inch howitzer. They opened their batteries upon me. It was returned spiritedly and with two pieces against forty odd mounted of 24 [pounders?] the white flag

went up in the evening and the capitulation entered into, which you have seen. It is true I had my ladders ready to go over the wall which I believe the garrison discovered and was afraid of a night attack and surrendered. When the flag was hoisted the [y] had three hundred effectives in the garrison — this number of Americans would have kept it from combined Urope [Europe]. There was one Indian wounded in the garrison and the others were sent out in the night across the bay before I got possession. Thus Sir I have given you a concise statement of the facts and all I regret is that I had not stormed the works, captured the governor, put him on his trial for the murder of Stokes and his family, and hung him for the deed. I could adopt no other way to “put an end to the war” but by possessing myself of the stronghold that was an asylum to the enemy and afforded them the means of offence. The officers of Spain having by their acts identified themselves with our enemy, became such, and by the law of nations subjected themselves to be treated as such. Self defence justified me in every act I did. I will stand justified before God and all Urope, and I regret that our government has extended the courtesy to Spain of withdrawing the troops from Pensacola before Spain gave a guarantee for the fulfilment of the treaty and the safety of our frontier. It was an act of courtesy that nothing but the insignificance and weakness of Spain can excuse, but it is not my province to find fault with the acts of the government, but it may have reason to repent of her clemency.

Make a tender to your lady of my sincere respects and best wishes for her happiness and receive Sir for yourself an expression of my unfeigned frendship and esteem — and — [I] remain respectfully

Yr. mo. ob. serv.

ANDREW JACKSON.

P. S. My eyes are weak and my hand trembles I am still weak and much debilitated Nothing but the hope of being serviceable to the wishes of my government and interest of the state of Tennessee could have induced me to have undertaken the journey. A. J.

The Honble

G. W. Campbell

Minister at Russia

Endorsed by Mr. Campbell — "Gen. Andrew Jackson, Chickasaw Nation, 5 Oct. 1818

Rec<sup>d</sup>  $\frac{25 \text{ Dec}^r}{7 \text{ Jan}^r}$  1818-19

Giving an account of the taking possession of Pensacola."  
ans<sup>d</sup> 8. Sept. 1819.

This letter was given by Major Campbell Brown of Spring Hill, Tennessee (a grandson, I think, of G. W. Campbell), to Colonel Gantt; and Colonel Gantt gave it to the Mercantile Library of St. Louis, where it is to be found. — JOHN FISKE.

VII

ANDREW JACKSON

AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY SEVENTY YEARS AGO



## VII

### ANDREW JACKSON


#### AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY SEVENTY YEARS AGO

THE period comprised between the years 1815 and 1860 — between our second war with England and our great Civil War — was the period in which American society was more provincial in character than at any time before or since. By provincialism I mean the opposite of cosmopolitanism; I refer to the state of things in which the people of a community know very little about other communities and care very little for foreign ideas and foreign affairs. I do not mean to imply that the community thus affected with provincialism is necessarily backward in its civilization. Provincialism is, indeed, one of the marks of backwardness, but it is a mark that is often found in the foremost communities. No one doubts that England and France stand in the front rank among civilized nations; but when a Frenchman in good society thinks that the people of the United States talk Spanish, or when a college-bred man in England imagines Indians in feathers and war-paint prowling in the backwoods near Boston, none can doubt that they are chargeable with provincialism in a very gross form indeed. This sort of dense ignorance is apt to underlie national antipathies, and when manifested between the different parts of a common country it is accountable for what we

call sectional prejudice. Such antipathies are usually ill founded. That human nature which we all possess in common is very far from perfect, but after all it is encouraging to find, as a general rule, that the better we understand people the more we like them. If all the bitterness, all the quarrels and bloodshed, that have come from sheer downright ignorance were to be eliminated from the annals of mankind, those annals would greatly shrink in volume. It is, therefore, devoutly to be wished that provincialism may by and by perish, and every encouragement should be given to the agencies which are gradually destroying it, such as literature, commerce, and travel, enabling the people of different countries to exchange ideas and learn something about each other's characters.

American provincialism sixty years ago, however, had something about it that was wholesome. A great many bad things have their good sides, and in looking back upon evils that we have got rid of, we can sometimes see that they did something toward checking other evils. An exceedingly foolish and barbarous custom was duelling; but it doubtless served somewhat to restrain that graceless impudence which sometimes seems threatening in turn to become a national misfortune. So with provincialism; it had its good side in so far as it was a reaction against the old colonial spirit which kept our minds in thralldom to Europe, and especially to England, long after we had by force of arms achieved political independence. Before the Revolutionary War we were kept perpetually reminded of England. Most of the colonial governors and revenue officers, and many of the judges, received their appointments from London. Every change of

ministry was fraught with possibilities affecting our welfare. Our seaports were familiar with the sight of British officials. We depended upon England for fine arts and fashions, as well as for a great many of the manufactured articles in common use. We read British historians and essayists, quoted British poets, and taught our children out of British text-books. We felt that the centre of things was in Europe, while we were comparatively raw communities on the edge of a vast continent, much of which was still unexplored and the greater part of it a wilderness possessed by horrid savages. This state of feeling lasted for some time after the Revolution. For a quarter of a century our political contests related quite as much to foreign as to domestic questions. The horrors of the French Revolution made the Federalists an English party; they looked upon England as the guardian of law and order in Europe. The Republicans, on the other hand, applauded the overthrow of a miserable despotism and sympathized with the ideas of revolutionary France. They accused the Federalists of leanings toward monarchy; they called them aristocrats and snobs, and thought it very mean in them to turn a cold shoulder to the people who had helped us win our independence. But it was not merely a question of our sympathies; we were really forced into taking sides. During nearly the whole of this period France and England were at war with each other, and in accordance with the barbaric system then prevalent, their privateers preyed upon the shipping of neutral nations. As we had not then discovered how to protect ships out of existence, we did a very large and profitable carrying trade. Our ships were the best in the world, and no other neutral





nation, unless it may have been Holland, had so many on the ocean. This fact kept foreign politics in the foreground until the culmination of the long quarrel was reached in the War of 1812-1815. That war has been called, with much propriety, our second war of independence. It taught other nations that we were not to be insulted with impunity, and it set our politics free from European complications. The year 1815 marks an epoch on both sides of the Atlantic. It was the beginning of thirty years of peace, during which, in America as in England, attention could be devoted to political and social reforms. Great and exciting questions of domestic politics soon came up to occupy the attention of Americans, and their thoughts were much less intimately concerned with what people were saying and doing on the other side of the ocean. We also paid less attention to European manners and fashions. Our statesmen of the Revolutionary period dressed very much like Englishmen, and since the Civil War it is so again. But in the intermediate period, between 1815 and 1860, we had the bright blue coat with brass buttons and the buff waistcoat, such as Daniel Webster used to wear when he made those immortal speeches that did so much to enkindle a passionate love for the Union and make it strong enough to endure the shock of war. That blue dress-coat with brass buttons was the visible symbol of the period of narrow, boastful, provincial, but wholesome and much-needed, Americanism.


Now, this feeling of Americanism grew up more rapidly and acquired greater intensity in the new states west of the mountains than in the old states on the seaboard. Observe the surprising rapidity

with which these new states were formed, as the obstacles to migration were removed. The chief obstacles had been the hostility of the Indians, and the difficulty of getting from place to place. During the late war the Indian power had been broken by Harrison in the North and by Jackson<sup>1</sup> in the South. In 1807 Robert Fulton had invented the steamboat. In 1811 a steamboat was launched on the Ohio River at Pittsburg, and presently such nimble craft were plying on all the Western rivers, carrying settlers and traders, farm produce and household utensils. This gave an immense impetus to the Western migration. After Ohio had been admitted to the Union in 1802, ten years had elapsed before the next state, Louisiana, was added. But in six years after the war a new state was added every year: Indiana in 1816, Mississippi in 1817, Illinois in 1818, Alabama in 1819, Maine in 1820, Missouri in 1821; all but one of them west of the Alleghanies, one of them west of the Mississippi. In President Monroe's second term, while there were thirty senators from the Atlantic states, there were already eighteen from the West. It was evident that the political centre of gravity was moving westward at a very rapid rate.

In the new Southern states thus created below the thirty-sixth parallel the South Carolinian type of society prevailed. In all the others there was an extensive and complicated mixing of people from different Atlantic states. Toward 1840, after Ericsson's

<sup>1</sup>" It has been pleasant too to revise many of my ideas and opinions: for my youthful memories go back to the days when Jackson was like a bogey to frighten naughty children! Boston was a place of *one idea* then." Extract from a letter of Mr. James Day to Dr. Fiske.

invention of the screw propeller had set up the new migration of foreigners from Europe, and after the great stream of New Englanders had begun to pour into the Northwest, the mixing became still more complicated. The effect of this was excellent in shaking men's ideas out of the old ruts, in bringing together people of somewhat various habits and associations, in breaking down artificial social distinctions, in broadening the range of sympathy, and in adding to the heartiness and cordiality of manner. This new society was much more completely democratic than that of the Atlantic states, and it soon began powerfully to react upon the latter. During the period of which I am speaking most of the states remodelled or amended their constitutions in such wise as to make them more democratic. There was an extension of the suffrage, a shortening of terms of office, and a disposition to make all offices elective. There was much that was wholesome in this democratic movement, but there was also some crudeness, and now and then a lamentable mistake was made. Perhaps the worst instance was that of electing judges for limited terms instead of having them appointed for life or during good behaviour. In particular cases the system may work fairly well, but its general tendency is demoralizing to bench and bar alike, and I believe it to be one of the most crying abominations by which our country is afflicted. Taken in connection with the disposition to seek violent redress for injuries, and with the mawkish humanitarianism of which criminals are so quick to take advantage, it has done much to diminish the security of life and property and to furnish a valid excuse for the rough



and ready methods of Judge Lynch. It is encouraging to observe at the present time some symptoms of a disposition to return to the older and sounder method of making judges. Good sense is so strongly developed among our people that we may reasonably calculate upon their profiting by hard experience and correcting their own errors in the long run. It is far better that popular errors should be corrected in this way than by some beneficent autocratic power, or by some set of people supposed to be wiser than others; and this, I believe, is the true theory of democracy. This is the vital point which Jefferson understood so much more clearly than Hamilton and the Federalists.

But in the period of which I am speaking, the theory of democracy was not usually taken so moderately as this. There was a kind of democratic fanaticism in the air. A kind of metaphysical entity called the People (spelled with a capital) was set up for men to worship. Its voice was the voice of God; and, like the king, it could do no wrong. It had lately been enthroned in America, and was going shortly to renovate the world. People began to forget all about the slow growth of our constitutional liberty through ages of struggle in England and Scotland. They began to forget all about our own colonial period, with its strongly marked characters and its political lessons of such profound significance. A habit grew up, which has not yet been outgrown, of talking about American history as if it began in 1776, an error as fatal to all correct understanding of the subject as that which Englishmen used to make in ignoring their own history prior to the Norman Conquest. We

began to look upon our federal Constitution as if it had been suddenly created by an act of miraculous wisdom, and had no roots in European soil. It was felt that our institutions were hedged about by a kind of divinity, and that by means of them we had become better than other nations; and, in our implicit reliance upon the infallible wisdom of the people, we went to work at legislation and at constitution-making in a much less sober spirit than to-day. As for Europe, we exaggerated its political shortcomings most egregiously, and failed to see that it could have any political lessons for us. The expressions most commonly heard about Europe were "pauper labor" and "effete dynasties." People seldom crossed the ocean to look at things over there with their own eyes. The feeling with which children then grew up found expression a little later in such questions as, "What do we care for abroad?" A gentleman who has been speaker of the House of Representatives and major-general in the army once said in a public speech that too much time was spent in studying the history of England; we had much better study that of the North American Indians; it was quite enough to know something about the continent we live on, the rest of the world was hardly worth knowing. At one time even the pronunciation of the word *European* seemed in danger of being forgotten; it was quite commonly pronounced *Európián*.

Those were the days of spread-eagle oratory on the Fourth of July, and whenever people were assembled in public, the days when ministers in the pulpit used to thank Heaven that "in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations" we had been born Americans.

They were the days when Elijah Pagram could silence all cavillers by reminding them that "our bright home is in the settin' sun." More summary were the methods of Mr. Hannibal Chollop. "Do you see this pistol?" said he to Martin Chuzzlewit. "I shot a man down with it the other day in the state of Illinois. I shot him for asserting in the *Spartan Portico*, a tri-weekly journal, that the ancient Athenians went ahead of the present locofoco ticket." Very few eminent persons from England visited the United States in those days, and it was quite natural that those who did should feel called upon, after going home, to write books recording their impressions of the country and the people. Such books, even when written in a friendly spirit, were sure to give mortal offence to the Americans, simply because it was impossible for the writers, without making themselves ridiculous, to pile up superlatives enough to satisfy our national vanity. When one reads Dickens's "American Notes," in which he treats us seriously, one finds it hard to understand the storm of indignation which it aroused, except that he did indeed touch upon one very sensitive spot, the incongruity between negro slavery and our fine talk about the rights of man. In "Martin Chuzzlewit" he made fun of us; but the good-natured banter which enraged our fathers only makes us laugh to-day. Dickens was friendly, Mrs. Trollope was not. "To speak plainly," said she, "I do not like the Americans." The poor woman had entered our country by what was then one of its back doors. She had landed at New Orleans and gone up by river to Cincinnati, where circumstances obliged her to live for more than a year in the old times when countless

pigs ran wild in the unpaved streets of the frontier town. Any one who wishes to understand American democracy sixty years ago should read her book. It is evidently a truthful account of a state of society in which very few of us would find it pleasant to live, and it is amusing to see the *naïveté* with which the writer's expressions become mollified as on her homeward journey she reaches Philadelphia and New York. It is noticeable that the examples of Americanism quoted by English travellers of that day were almost always taken from the West. They had very little to say about Boston because it was too much like an English town. They came in search of novelty and found it in the valley of the Mississippi, as they now find it in the Rocky Mountains.

No such novelty, however, can the European traveller find anywhere in the United States to-day as that which so astonished him half a century ago. The period of provincialism which I have sought to describe came to an end with our Civil War. The overthrow of slavery removed one barrier to the sympathy between America and western Europe. The sacrifices we had to make in order to save our country intensified our love for it, but diminished our boastfulness. In a chastened spirit we were enabled to see that even in American institutions there might be elements of weakness, that perhaps the experience of other nations might have lessons worthy of our study, and that the whole world is none too wide a field wherefrom to gather wisdom. Moreover, the railroad and telegraph, two of the mightiest agencies yet devised for hastening the millennium, have already wrought a marvellous transformation, which is but the


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harbinger of greater transformations, in the opinions and sentiments and mental habits of men and women in all civilized countries. Nowhere have the complicated effects been more potent or more marked than in the United States. Every part of our vast domain has been brought into easy contact with all four quarters of the globe. Australia and Zululand are less remote from us to-day than England was in Jackson's time. We go back and forth across the Atlantic in crowds, and we exchange ideas with the whole world. We are becoming daily more and more cosmopolitan, and are, perhaps, as much in the centre of things as any people.

However, as I said a moment ago, the old provincial spirit of Americanism was in its day eminently useful and wholesome. The swagger and tall talk was simply the bubbling forth that accompanied the fermentation of a vigorous and hopeful national spirit, but for which we might long before this have been broken up into a group of little spiteful, squabbling republics, with custom-houses and sentinels in uniform scattered along every state line. The second war with England was the first emphatic assertion of this national spirit. Before that time the sentiment of union was weak. In 1786 nearly all the states were, for various reasons, snarling and showing their teeth. In 1799 Kentucky uttered a growl in which something was heard that sounded like nullification. In 1804 Timothy Pickering dallied with a scheme, to which it was hoped that Aaron Burr might lend assistance, for a Northern confederacy of New England and New York, with the possible addition of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In 1808 some of the New Eng-



land Federalists, enraged at Jefferson's embargo, entertained thoughts of secession, and in 1814 there was mischief brewing at Hartford. It was the result of the war with Great Britain that dealt the first staggering blow to these separatist tendencies. In that grand result, so far as the naval victories were concerned, the chief credit was won by New England, and it went far toward setting the popular sentiment in that part of the country out of gear with the schemes of the moss-back Federalist leaders. But as regarded the land victories and the whole political situation, the chief credit accrued to the West. It was the much-loved statesman, "Harry of the West," the eloquent Henry Clay, that had prevailed upon the country to appeal to arms, in spite of the wrath of the New Englanders and the misgivings of President Madison. It was the invincible soldier of Tennessee that crowned the work with a prodigious victory. Had the war ended simply with the treaty of Ghent, which did not give us quite so much as we wanted, the discontent of New England would probably have continued. It was the battle of New Orleans that killed New England federalism. It struck a chord of patriotic feeling to which the people of New England responded promptly. The Federalist leaders were at once discredited, and not a man that had gone to the Hartford convention but had hard work, for the rest of his life, to regain the full confidence of his fellow-citizens. In the presidential election of 1816 the Federalists still contrived to get thirty-four electoral votes for Rufus King. In 1820 they did not put forward any candidate; their party was dead and buried. All but one of the electoral votes were given to James Monroe. One elector cast



his vote for John Quincy Adams, just as a matter of form, in order that no President after Washington might be chosen by an absolutely unanimous vote.

This was what we called the "era of good feeling." The war had disposed of the old issues, and the new ones had not yet shaped themselves. As all the candidates for the election of 1824 were called Republicans, the issues between them seemed to be purely of a personal nature. There was a genuine political force at work, however, and a very strong one. This was the spirit of reaction against European ideas, the bumptious and boisterous democratic Americanism of the young West. The backwoodsmen and Mississippi traders were to be represented in the White House, in spite of Virginia planters and Harvard professors. There was a wish to put an end to what some people called the "Virginia dynasty" of Presidents; and it was with this in view that Clay kept up, during Monroe's administration, an opposition that was sometimes factious. It was, for instance, partly because Monroe had sanctioned Jackson's measures in Florida, that Clay and his friends felt bound to attack them, thus laying the foundations of the lifelong feud between Clay and Jackson. In 1823, when the latter resigned the governorship of Florida and took his seat in the United States Senate, he had already been nominated by the legislature of Tennessee as the candidate of that state for the presidency. Some of his friends, under the lead of William Lewis, had even two years earlier conceived the idea of making him President. At first General Jackson cast ridicule upon the idea. "Do they suppose," said he, "that I am such a d—d fool as to think myself fit for President of the United

States? No, sir. I know what I am fit for. I can command a body of men in a rough way; but I am not fit to be President." Such is the anecdote told by H. M. Brackenridge, who was Jackson's secretary in Florida (Parton, II. 354). At this time the general felt old and weak, and had made up his mind to spend the remainder of his days in peace on his farm. Of personal ambition, as ordinarily understood, Jackson seems to have had much less than many other men. But he was, like most men, susceptible to flattery, and the discovery of his immense popularity no doubt went far to persuade him that he might do credit to himself as President.<sup>1</sup> On the 4th of March, 1824, he

<sup>1</sup> JACKSON, CRAWFORD, AND ADAMS IN 1824

(Extract from a manuscript letter of John A. Dix, dated Washington, 22d February, 1824)

"Mr. Calhoun's chances of success depended on the course of Pennsylvania. This state, it appears, will support the hero of New Orleans, and Mr. Calhoun's fate is sealed. My opinion is that the West will renounce Mr. Clay's persuasion, and will very generally support Gen. Jackson. Mr. A., Mr. Crawford, and Gen. J. therefore remain the strong competitors. Between these three I have certainly a very decided choice. Mr. Crawford's connection with the Radical party, his doubtful principles and disingenuous course in the administration forbid me to desire his elevation. Mr. A. has extraordinary merits. His extensive acquirements, incorruptible morals, and devotion to his country's service furnish him with the strongest and most indisputable claims. But he is, I fear, little fitted for popular government. No man would administer an absolute system better, because he would never prostitute the possession of power to corrupt or tyrannical ends. But I am apprehensive that he will be found to possess very little talent for managing men, which is the most important of all qualities under a government where the people have so immediate a participation, as under ours, in the business of administration. I fear, therefore, should he be elected, that his administration will be disturbed by dangerous and distracting feuds. Swayed by apprehensions like these, . . . I am strongly inclined to wish for Gen. Jackson's success. The character of this great man is not at all understood. He has been induced to adopt violent measures for the attainment of useful ends, but I am convinced by what I have seen this winter, that he is a good man, and that he

was nominated in a frenzy of enthusiasm by a convention at Harrisburg, in Pennsylvania. The regular nominee of the congressional caucus was W. H. Crawford of Georgia. The other candidates were Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams. For the Vice-president there was a general agreement upon Calhoun. There was no opposition between the Northern and the Southern states. Such an issue had been raised for a moment in 1820, but the Missouri Compromise had settled it so effectually that it was not to be heard of again for several years, and the credit of this had been largely due to Clay. All the four candidates belonged nominally to the Republican party, but in their attitude toward the Constitution Adams and Clay were loose constructionists, while Crawford and Jackson were strict constructionists, and in this difference was foreshadowed a new division of parties. At the election in November, 1824, Mr. Crawford, who stood for the "Virginia dynasty" in a certain sense, received the entire electoral votes of Georgia and Virginia, with 5 votes from New York, 2 from Delaware, and 1 from Maryland. Mr. Adams had all the New England votes, with 26 from New York, 1 from Delaware, 3 from Maryland, 1 from Illinois, 2 from Louisiana. Mr. Clay had the entire vote of Missouri, Kentucky, and Ohio, with 4 from New York. General Jackson received the entire votes of New Jersey, Pennsylvania,

knows how to govern his passions. . . . It is a principal object with the sound politicians of the country to abolish party distinctions and to elevate talent wherever it is found. But as Mr. Adams has been a Federalist, the least inclination towards federal men or federal measures would excite alarm and disturb his popularity. Gen. Jackson, having always been a violent Democrat, might avail himself of the talents of the Federal party without danger, and no one believes that he would be a party man."

both Carolinas, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Indiana, with 7 from Maryland, 1 from New York, 3 from Louisiana, and 2 from Illinois. All of Crawford's 41 electoral votes were from the original seaboard states. Of Adams's 84 votes, all but 3 were from the same quarter. Of Clay's 37, all but 4 were from the West. To Jackson's 99 the West contributed 29, the East 70. If Jackson could have had Clay's Western vote in addition to his own, it would have made 132, which was one more than the number necessary for a choice. The power of the West was thus distinctly shown for the first time in a national election. As none of the candidates had a majority, it was left for the House of Representatives to choose a President from the three names highest on the list, in accordance with the twelfth amendment to the Constitution. Clay was thus rendered ineligible, and there was naturally some scheming among the friends of the other candidates to secure his powerful coöperation. Clay's feeling toward Adams had for some time been unfriendly, but on the other hand there was no love lost between Jackson and Clay, and the latter was of course sincere in his opinion that Adams was a statesman and Jackson nothing but a soldier. It was not in the least strange, under the circumstances, that Clay should throw his influence in favour of Adams. It would have been strange if he had not done so. The result was that when in the House the vote was taken by states, there were 13 for Adams, 7 for Jackson, and 4 for Crawford. Adams thus became President, and Jackson's friends, in their bitter disappointment, hungered for a "grievance" upon which they might vent their displeasure, and which might serve as a "rally-

ing cry " for the next campaign. Benton went so far as to maintain that because Jackson had a greater number of electoral votes than any other candidate, the House was virtually "defying the will of the people" in choosing any name but his. To this it was easily answered that in any case our electoral college, which was one of the most deliberately framed devices of the Constitution, gives but a very indirect and partial expression of the "will of the people"; and furthermore, if Benton's arguments were sound, why should the Constitution have provided for an election by Congress, instead of allowing a simple plurality in the college to decide the election? The extravagance of Benton's objection, coming from so able a source, is an index to the bitter disappointment of Jackson's followers. The needed "grievance" was furnished when Adams selected Clay as his Secretary of State. Many of Jackson's friends interpreted this appointment as the result of a bargain whereby Clay had made Adams President in consideration of obtaining the first place in the cabinet, carrying with it, according to the notion then prevalent, a fair prospect of the succession to the presidency. It was natural enough for the friends of a disappointed candidate to make such a charge. It was to Benton's credit that he always scouted the idea of a corrupt bargain between Adams and Clay. Many people, however, believed it. In Congress, John Randolph's famous allusion to the "coalition between Blifil and Black George—the Puritan and the black-leg—" led to a duel between Randolph and Clay, which served to impress the matter upon the popular mind without enlightening it; the pistol is of small value as an agent of enlightenment. The charge was

utterly without support and in every way improbable. The excellence of the appointment of Clay was beyond cavil, and the sternly upright Adams was less influenced by what people might think of his actions than any other President since Washington. But in this case he was perhaps too independent. The appointment was no doubt ill-considered. It made it necessary for Clay, in many a public speech, to defend himself against the imputation. To mention the charge to Jackson, whose course in Florida had been censured by Clay, was enough to make him believe it; and he did so to his dying day.

It is not likely that the use made of this "grievance" had any decisive effect in securing victory for Jackson in 1828. Doubtless it helped him, but the causes of his success lay far deeper. The stream of democratic tendency was swelling rapidly. Heretofore our Presidents had been men of aristocratic type, with advantages of wealth or education or social training. In a marked degree all these advantages were united in John Quincy Adams. He was the most learned of all our Presidents. He had been a Harvard professor. He was a trained diplomatist, and had lived much in Europe. He was an able administrative officer. In his character there was real grandeur. For bulldog courage and tenacity he was much like Jackson, but in other respects a stronger contrast than the two men afforded cannot well be imagined. Curiously enough, in point of politeness and grace of manner, the backwoodsman far surpassed the diplomatist. A man with less training in statesmanship than Jackson would have been hard to find. In his defects he represented

average humanity, while his excellences were such as the most illiterate citizen could appreciate. In such a man the ploughboy and the blacksmith could feel that in some essential respects they had for President one of their own sort. Above all, he was the great military hero of the day, and as such he came to the presidency as naturally as Taylor and Grant in later days, as naturally as his contemporary Wellington, without any training in statesmanship, became prime minister of England. A man far more politic and complaisant than Adams could not have won the election of 1828 against such odds. He obtained 83 electoral votes against 178 for Jackson. Calhoun was reëlected Vice-president. In this election the votes of New York and Maryland were divided almost equally between the two candidates. Jackson got one electoral vote from Maine. All the rest of New England, with New Jersey and Delaware, went for Adams. Jackson carried Pennsylvania, Virginia, both Carolinas, and Georgia, and everything west of the Alleghanies, from the Lakes to the Gulf. There were many Western districts in which Adams did not get a single vote. After this sweeping victory Jackson came to the presidency with a feeling that he had at length succeeded in making good his claim to a violated right, and this feeling had its influence upon his conduct.

In Jackson's cabinet, as first constituted, Martin Van Buren of New York was Secretary of State; S. D. Ingham of Pennsylvania Secretary of the Treasury; J. H. Eaton of Tennessee Secretary of War; John Branch of North Carolina Secretary of the Navy; J. M. Berrien of Georgia Attorney-gen-



eral; W. T. Barry of Kentucky Postmaster-general. With the exception of Van Buren, as compared with members of earlier cabinets, — not merely with such men as Hamilton, Madison, or Gallatin, but with such as Pickering, Wolcott, Monroe, or even Crawford, — these were obscure names. The innovation in the personal character of the cabinet was even more marked than the innovation in the presidential office. The autocratic Jackson employed his secretaries and clerks. His confidential advisers were a few intimate friends who held no important offices. These were — W. B. Lewis, Amos Kendall, Duff Green, and Isaac Hill — came to be known as the “kitchen cabinet.” Major Lewis was an old friend who had much to do with bringing Jackson forward for the presidency. The other three were editors of popular newspapers. Kendall was a man of considerable ability and many good qualities, including a plentiful supply of those virtuous intentions wherewith a certain part of the universe is said to be paved. He was what would now be called a “machine politician.” On many occasions he was the ruling spirit of the administration, and the cause of some of its worst mistakes. Jackson’s career cannot be fully understood without taking into account the agency of Amos Kendall; yet it is not always easy to assign the character and extent of the influence which he exerted.

A yet more notable innovation was Jackson’s treatment of the civil service. This was the great blunder and scandal of his administration, and because we are still suffering from its effects it is in the minds of the present generation more closely associated with Ja

son's name than all his good work. The abominable slough of debauchery in which our civil service has wallowed for half a century is not only a disgrace to the American people, but it is probably the most serious of all the dangers that threaten the continuance of American freedom. Its foul but subtle miasma poisons and benumbs the whole body politic. The virus runs through everything, and helps to sustain all manner of abominations, from grasping monopolies and civic jobbery down to political rum-shops. And for a crowning evil, so long as it stays with us, it is next to impossible to get great political questions correctly stated and argued on their merits.


Under all the administrations previous to Jackson's our civil service had been conducted with ability and purity, and might have been compared favourably with that of any other country in the world. The earlier Presidents proceeded upon the theory that public office is a public trust, and cannot, without base dishonour, be treated as a reward for partisan services. They conducted the business of government upon sound business principles, and as long as a postmaster showed himself efficient in distributing the mail, they did not turn him out because of his vote. From the first, however, there were well-meaning people who could not comprehend the wisdom of such a policy. When Jefferson's election brought with it a change of party at the seat of government, there were some who thought it should also bring with it a wholesale change of office-holders. But such was not Jefferson's view of the case. The name of "Jeffersonian Democrat," as applied to a certain class of hungry place-hunters in our time, is an atrocious libel upon that great man.

Such people would have gone hungry a great while before he would have fed them from the public crib. It was strongly urged upon him once that he should make room in the custom-house for some persons, who, as it was alleged, in helping to elect him President, had virtually saved the country. "Indeed," replied Jefferson, "I have heard that the city of Rome was once saved by geese; but I never heard that these geese were made revenue officers." During the forty years between April 30, 1789, and March 4, 1829, the total number of removals from office was seventy-four, and out of this number five were defaulters. During the first year of Jackson's administration the number of changes made in the civil service was about two thousand. Such was the sudden and abrupt inauguration upon a national scale of the so-called "spoils system." The phrase originated with W. L. Marcy, of New York, who in a speech in the Senate in 1831 declared that "to the victors belong the spoils." The man who said this of course did not realize that he was making one of the most infamous remarks recorded in history. There was, however, much aptness in his phrase, inasmuch as it was a confession that the business of American politics was about to be conducted upon principles fit only for the warfare of barbarians. The senator from New York had been reared in a poisonous atmosphere. The "spoils system" was first gradually brought to perfection in the state politics of New York and Pennsylvania, and it was inevitable that it should sooner or later be introduced into the sphere of national politics. There can hardly be a doubt that if Jackson had never been President, similar results would have followed at about the same time. If Adams had been reëlected, the

catastrophe would have been deferred for four years, but it was bound to come soon. This in no wise alters or qualifies Jackson's responsibility for the mischief, but it helps us to comprehend it in its true relations. At that time the notion had firmly planted itself in men's minds that there is something especially democratic, and therefore meritorious, about "rotation in office." It was argued, with that looseness of analogy so common in men's reasonings about history and politics, that permanency of tenure tends to create an "aristocracy of office," and is therefore contrary to the "spirit of American institutions." It was, as I said before, an age of crude, unintelligent experiments in democracy; and as soon as this notion had once got into men's heads, it was inevitable that the experiment of the "spoils system" must be tried, just as the experiment of an elective judiciary had to be tried. The way was prepared in 1820 by Crawford, when he succeeded in getting the law enacted that limits the tenure of office to four years. This dangerous measure excited very little discussion at the time. People could not understand the evil until taught by hard experience. The honest Jackson would have been astonished if he had been told that he was laying the foundations of a gigantic system of corruption. He was very ready to believe ill of political opponents, and to make generalizations from extremely inadequate data. Democratic newspapers, while the campaign frenzy was on them, were full of windy declamation about the wholesale corruption introduced into all parts of the government by Adams and Clay. In point of fact there has never been a cleaner administration in all our history than that of Quincy Adams,

but nothing was too bad for Jackson to believe of these two men. It was quite like him to take all the campaign lies about them as literally true; and when Tobias Watkins, the fourth auditor of the treasury, was found to be delinquent in his accounts, it was easy to suppose that many others were, in one way or another, just as bad. In his wholesale removals Jackson doubtless supposed he was doing the country a service by "turning the rascals out." The immediate consequence of this demoralizing policy was a struggle for control of the patronage between Calhoun and Van Buren, who were rival aspirants for the succession to the presidency.

A curious affair now came in to influence Jackson's personal relations to these men. Early in 1829, John Eaton, Secretary of War, married a Mrs. Timberlake with whose reputation gossip had been busy. It would seem that this ill repute was deserved, but Jackson was always slow to believe charges against a woman. His own wife, who had been outrageously maligned by the Whig newspapers during the campaign, had lately died. My venerable friend, Colonel Edward Butler, of St. Louis, the oldest living graduate of West Point, was Jackson's ward, and more familiar with his private life for forty years than any other man. He cherished Jackson's memory with a feeling akin to idolatry, and I only wish I could begin to remember all the interesting things he has told me about him. They tried to keep newspaper lies from coming to Mrs. Jackson's ears, but of course in vain. Many a time Colonel Butler, coming suddenly into the room, would find the poor old lady sitting absorbed in grief, with her great quarto Bible in her lap and tears stealing down her



cheeks. She was one of the best women that ever lived, says Colonel Butler, and there can be little doubt that she died of a broken heart. Whig editors had killed her as much as if they had taken guns and shot her. Soon after her death Mrs. Eaton came one day to the President, and throwing herself at his feet, told him with many sobs and tears how she was ill used and persecuted. Could nothing be done, she implored, to mend matters? Jackson was haggard with grief, and fiercely vindictive. He knew that his wife had been wickedly slandered; he took it for granted that the case must be the same with Mrs. Eaton. In this he was doubtless mistaken, but his letters on the subject are written in a noble temper and fully reveal the spirit which made him take Mrs. Eaton's part with more than his customary vehemence. Mrs. Calhoun and the wives of the secretaries would not recognize Mrs. Eaton. Mrs. Donelson, wife of the President's nephew, and now mistress of ceremonies at the White House, took a similar stand. Jackson scolded his secretaries and sent Mrs. Donelson home to Tennessee, but all in vain. He found that vanquishing Wellington's veterans was a light task compared with that of contending against the ladies in an affair of this sort. Foremost among those who frowned Mrs. Eaton out of society was Mrs. Calhoun. On the other hand, Van Buren, a widower, found himself able to be somewhat more complaisant, and accordingly rose in Jackson's esteem. The fires were fanned by Lewis and Kendall, who saw in Van Buren a more eligible ally than Calhoun. Presently intelligence was obtained from Crawford, who hated Calhoun, to the effect that the latter, as member of Monroe's cabinet, had disap-

proved of Jackson's conduct in Florida. This was quite true, but Calhoun had discreetly yielded his judgment to that of the cabinet, led by Adams, and thus had officially sanctioned Jackson's conduct. These facts, as handled by Eaton and Lewis, led Jackson to suspect Calhoun of treacherous double-dealing, and the result was a quarrel which broke up the cabinet. In order to get Calhoun's friends, Ingham, Branch, and Berrien, out of the cabinet, the other secretaries began by resigning. This device did not succeed, and the ousting of the three secretaries entailed further quarrelling, in the course of which the Eaton affair and the Florida business were beaten threadbare in the newspapers and evoked sundry challenges to deadly combat.<sup>1</sup> In the spring and

<sup>1</sup> MRS. LEE TO COLONEL GANTT

[Apropos of General Jackson's relations with Mrs. Eaton and Mr. Calhoun. The original letter from which these extracts are taken is dated Silver Spring, May 23, 1889, and is preserved among Dr. Fiske's papers.]

" . . . I shall relate chiefly what I heard when General Jackson visited my Parents or when his guest. I was eleven years old when I first met him, and twenty-three at our last parting. When my Parents removed from Kentucky to Washington my brothers did not accompany us, consequently I was more than ever their constant companion, being their only daughter, and Mother my teacher. . . . The first time I ever heard Mrs. Eaton's name mentioned was in a conversation between Mother and the President, where he spoke of the annoyance given him by Mrs. Donelson's refusal to be civil to Mrs. Eaton when she called at the White House; he thought Mrs. Eaton, as the wife of his friend and a member of the Cabinet, ought to be politely received, but 'Emily' is influenced by her husband who is under 'Calhoun's thralldom.' This was the purport of his complaint, and out of this domestic disagreement arose the gossip which was well known to have been kept up by Mrs. Eaton, who enjoyed notoriety even at the expense of her own reputation and of the truth. . . . Soon after Major and Mrs. Donelson went to Tennessee for a short time. I afterwards heard from my Parents that they repented of their position, and Mrs.

summer of 1831, the new cabinet was formed, consisting of Edward Livingston, Secretary of State; Louis

Eaton was received as a visitor, but to my positive conviction never to stay even for a day. . . . Nothing strikes me more in reviewing the past than the liberties taken with the General by those who formed his family circle, and the gentleness with which he submitted to impositions, especially of servants and children. But if it touched a point of duty he was firm, though always amiable and kind. . . . I was frequently at the White House in childhood and as a young lady. . . . I never met Mrs. Eaton there. When she went she did so as any other acquaintance, and from what I have heard was received with but scant courtesy by Mrs. Donelson. . . . The White House has never since been graced with a more beautiful, refined, gentle woman [Mrs. D.], — except perhaps she may have been excelled by Mrs. Cleveland, who had greater modern educational advantages and the rare gift of tact. . . . I heard General Jackson comment but once on Mrs. Eaton . . . during my visit to the Hermitage in 1842. . . .

“Mrs. Eaton’s daughter, Virginia Timberlake, was my school-mate at Mm<sup>e</sup>. Sigoigne’s; she was a brilliant woman in mind, appearance, and accomplishments, who in spite of her want of veracity attracted me very much, but my mother forbade any intimacy as she did not approve of Miss Timberlake or visit Mrs. Eaton. But Virginia was so amusing that I fear I would have been very disobedient but for my dear friend and monitor, Isabella Cass, who had the same instructions from home, for I know that neither the Cass nor the Woodbury families, with whom I have had a life-long intimacy, visited Mrs. Eaton, though Judge Woodbury and Governor Cass were members of the Jackson Cabinet. After we left school, by hard begging, I sometimes got permission to go to see Virginia, which calls she never returned. Still when in trouble she would write for me to come to her. At that time, she was engaged to be married to Barton Key, to which both families objected bitterly. Mrs. Eaton’s treatment of her daughter amounted to cruelty. Virginia escaped from some of it by deceiving her mother. I told the General of this episode. . . . He had always felt sorry for ‘The Timberlake children,’ knowing that their ‘Mother’s lack of truth would be fatal to them.’ He had known their grandparents, the O’Neils, when he was Senator from Tennessee and Mrs. O’Neil had been very kind to his wife, Mrs. Jackson, when ill; and General Jackson, when consulted by his ‘friend Eaton’ about his marriage, advised him to marry ‘the Widow Timberlake’ and promised to stand by him. . . . I am convinced, and with much reason, that Mme. Sampayo, alias Virginia Timberlake, has inspired these French romances about her mother and General Jackson: she disliked and spoke bitterly of both, and several times in the past thirty years, I have seen and heard of . . . different articles on this subject in Paris paper. She always changes her history and gets coarser as she grows



McLane, Treasury ; Lewis Cass, War ; Levi Woodbury, Navy ; R. B. Taney, Attorney-general ; in post-office,

older. I suppose she may need money, or craves notoriety which it may bring her. . . .

“ When my Parents bought their home opposite the War Department it needed extensive repairs, and we went to live there before it was free from the smell of paint. The President when he called insisted that I stay at the White House (as the paint made me ill) until the odour was gone. I went, and it was quite six weeks before he and I thought it safe for me to return home. I never had a happier visit. He did smoke his pipe after dinner, and I have filled his fresh, clean clay pipes, with long cane stems, many times for him ; but he rarely used a pipe more than one day, and there was a bundle of canes brought along with the new pipes. . . . I thus became informed about some very important matters. The removal of the Government funds from the Bank of the United States which was then in progress was one of them. The President sent several friends to New York to obtain reliable information from commercial monied men about banks or institutions to which it might be safe to transfer the Government Deposits. Mr. Kendall, from his letter, must have been one of them, and wrote in the most discouraging tone, to which the President replied ; and I either copied his letter or he dictated it, for I remember distinctly that he warned Mr. Kendall not to be misled by the emissaries of Nicholas Biddle (‘ who is now a desperate man ’) and ‘ who is nagging the footsteps of every prominent official,’ because nothing but the Public Deposit concealed the fact that Biddle’s Bank was at that moment ‘ bankrupt.’ That was the year your class graduated at West Point. . . .

“ Blair mentioned to me that Mr. Fiske does not believe that General Jackson threatened to hang Mr. Calhoun. I think he is mistaken. . . . I am certain that the main import of the story was (as I heard it) true,— which was, upon the first ‘ overt act ’ at Charleston, he would have Mr. Calhoun and the other leading Conspirators arrested and tried for treason, of which they would undoubtedly be found guilty, when he would hang every one of them. I heard Mr. Crittenden and Father talk about this matter ; both laughed very heartily at the way in which Governor Letcher described the effect on Mr. Calhoun of this threat, when Governor Letcher reported to him the conversation with General Jackson in which the threat was made, Governor Letcher saying to Mr. Calhoun that he came directly from the White House to inform him of his peril. In 1842, when at the Hermitage, General Jackson expressed his opinion to me very freely of Mr. Calhoun, whose intellect he said was of the highest order, but he knew him to be heartless, selfish, and a physical coward. Mr. Clay was his personal enemy and had done him wrongs Mr. Calhoun dared not do, but Mr. Clay was a brave man, and a patriot, who loved, and would have gladly given his life to serve his country.”

no change. On Van Buren's resignation, Jackson at once appointed him minister to England, but there was a warm dispute in the Senate over his confirmation, and it was defeated at length by the casting vote of Calhoun. This check only strengthened Jackson's determination to have Van Buren for his successor in the presidency. The progress of this quarrel entailed a break in the "kitchen cabinet," in which Duff Green, editor of the *Telegraph* and friend of Calhoun, was thrown out. His place was taken by Francis Preston Blair of Kentucky, a man of eminent ability and earnest patriotism. To him and his sons, as energetic opponents of nullification and secession, our country owes a debt of gratitude which can hardly be overstated. Blair's indignant attitude toward nullification brought him at once into earnest sympathy with Jackson. In December, 1830, Blair began publishing the *Globe*, the organ henceforth of Jackson's party. For a period of ten years, until the defeat of the Democrats in 1840, Blair and Kendall were the ruling spirits in the administration. Their policy was to reëlect Jackson to the presidency in 1832, and make Van Buren his successor in 1836.

During Jackson's administration there came about a new division of parties. The strict constructionists, opposing internal improvements, protective tariff, and national bank, retained the name of Democrats, which had long been applied to members of the old Republican party. The term *Republican* fell into disuse. The loose constructionists, under the lead of Clay, took the name of Whigs, as it suited their purposes to describe Jackson as a kind of tyrant; and they tried to dis-

credit their antagonists by calling them Tories, but the device found little favour. On strict constructionist grounds Jackson in 1829 vetoed the bill for a government subscription to the stock of the Maysville turnpike in Kentucky; and two other similar bills he disposed of by a new method which the Whigs indignantly dubbed a "pocket veto." The struggle over the tariff was especially important as bringing out a clear expression of the doctrine of nullification on the part of South Carolina. Practically, however, nullification was first attempted by Georgia in the case of the disputes with the Cherokee Indians. Under treaties with the federal government these Indians occupied lands which were coveted by the white people. Adams had made himself very unpopular in Georgia by resolutely defending the treaty rights of these Indians. Immediately upon Jackson's election the state government assumed jurisdiction over their lands, and proceeded to legislate for them, passing laws that discriminated against them. Disputes at once arose, in the course of which Georgia twice refused to obey the Supreme Court of the United States. At the request of the governor of Georgia, Jackson withdrew the federal troops from the Cherokee country and refused to enforce the rights which had been guaranteed to the Indians by the United States. His feelings toward Indians were those of a frontier fighter, and he asked, with telling force, whether an Eastern state, such as New York, would endure the nuisance of an independent Indian state within her own boundaries. In his sympathy with the people of Georgia on the particular question at issue, he seemed for the moment to be conniving at the dangerous prin-

ciple of nullification. These events were carefully noted by the politicians of South Carolina. The protectionist policy which since the peace of 1815 had been growing in favour at the North had culminated in 1828 in the so-called "tariff of abominations." This tariff, the result of a wild, helter-skelter scramble of rival interests, deserved its name on many accounts. It discriminated, with especial unfairness, against the Southern people, who were very naturally and properly enraged by it. A new tariff, passed in 1832, modified some of the most objectionable features of the old one, but still failed of justice to the Southerners. Jackson was opposed to the principle of protective tariffs, and from his course with Georgia it might be argued that he would not interfere with extreme measures on the part of the South. During the whole of Jackson's first term there was more or less vague talk about nullification. The subject had a way of obtruding itself upon all sorts of discussions, as in the famous debates on Foote's resolutions which lasted over five months in 1830 and called forth Webster's wonderful speech in reply to Hayne. A few weeks after this speech, at a public dinner in commemoration of Jefferson's birthday, after sundry regular toasts had seemed to indicate a drift of sentiment in approval of nullification, Jackson suddenly arose with a volunteer toast, "Our Federal Union: it must be preserved." It was like a bombshell. Calhoun was prompt to reply with a toast and speech in behalf of "Liberty, dearer than the Union," but the nullifiers were bitterly disappointed and chagrined. In spite of this warning, South Carolina held a convention November 19, 1832, and declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 to be null and void in South Caro-

lina; all state officers and jurors were required to take an oath of obedience to this edict; appeals to the federal Supreme Court were prohibited under penalties; and the federal government was warned that an attempt on its part to enforce the revenue laws would immediately provoke South Carolina to secede from the Union. The ordinance of nullification was to take effect on the 1st of February, 1833, and preparations for war were begun at once. On the 16th December the President issued a proclamation in which he declared that he should enforce the laws in spite of any and all resistance that might be made; and he showed that he was in earnest by forthwith sending Lieutenant David Farragut with a naval force to Charleston harbour and ordering General Scott to have troops ready to enter South Carolina if necessary. In the proclamation, which was written by Livingston, the President thus defined his position:<sup>1</sup> "I consider the power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one state, incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed." Governor Hayne of South Carolina issued a counter-proclamation, and a few days afterward Calhoun resigned the vice-presidency and was chosen to succeed Hayne in the senate. Jackson's resolute attitude was approved

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth B. Lee in her letter to Colonel Gantt, quoted on pages 292-294, wrote, "My Father said to me that the Nullification Proclamation as first drafted by General Jackson was a far more able paper than the polished substitute based on it and written by Mr. Livingston and adopted by the President."

by public opinion throughout the country. By the Southern people generally the action of South Carolina was regarded as precipitate and unconstitutional. Even in that state a Union convention met at Columbia and announced its intention of supporting the President. In January Calhoun declared in the Senate that his state was not hostile to the Union and had not meditated an armed resistance; a "peaceable secession," to be accomplished by threats, was probably the ultimatum really contemplated. In spite of Jackson's warning, the nullifiers were surprised by his unflinching attitude, and complained of it as inconsistent with his treatment of Georgia. When the first of February came the nullifiers deferred action. In the course of that month a bill for enforcing the tariff passed both houses of Congress, and at the same time Clay's compromise tariff was adopted, providing for the gradual reduction of the duties until 1842, after which all duties were to be kept at twenty per cent. This compromise was well-meant but pernicious, for it enabled the nullifiers to claim a victory and retreat from their position with colours flying. Calhoun, indeed, afterward pointed to the issue of the contest as conclusively proving the beneficent character of his theory of nullification. Here, he said, by merely threatening to nullify an obnoxious, and as he maintained unconstitutional, act of federal legislation, South Carolina had secured its repeal, and all was pleasant and peaceful! It was not Jackson, however, but Clay, that Calhoun had to thank for the compromise, nor were the nullifiers by any means as well satisfied as he tried to believe.

The nullifiers, indeed, had made a great mistake

when they inferred from Jackson's attitude toward Georgia that they could count upon his aid or connivance in the case of South Carolina. The insubordination of Georgia was shown in refusing to obey a decree of the Supreme Court, and Jackson had no fondness for the Supreme Court. He is said to have exclaimed, somewhat maliciously, "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it!" But the nullification act of South Carolina was a direct challenge to the executive head of the United States government. He could see its bearings in an instant, and it aroused all the combativeness that was in his nature.

During this nullification controversy Jackson kept up the attacks upon the United States Bank which he had begun in his first annual message to Congress in 1829. His antipathy to such a bank, in which the federal government was a shareholder and virtually to some extent a director, had been shown as long ago as Washington's administration, when the bank was first established. For two reasons it was especially obnoxious to the people of the South and the Southwest, and to the Democratic party generally. In the first place, the question as to the constitutional authority of Congress to establish such an institution was preëminently the test question between strict constructionists and loose constructionists. In the great fight between them it played the same part that Little Round Top played in the battle of Gettysburg. Once let the enemy carry that point and the whole field was lost. The contest over the assumption of state debts had faded out of sight before Jackson's presidency; it had become what the Germans call an "*überwundene*

*standpunkt.*" The contest over protective tariffs, on the other hand, had only lately become severe. But there the bank had been standing for nearly forty years, a perpetual menace to the theory of strict construction. President Madison had reluctantly signed the bill for its recharter in 1816, apparently because he could think of no practical alternative. The new charter was to expire in 1836, and President Jackson, in his determination that it should not again be renewed, was restrained by no such practical considerations.

In the second place, the bank was hated as the most prominent visible symbol of Hamilton's plan for an alliance between the federal government and the moneyed classes of society. In this feeling there was no doubt something of the sheer prejudice which ignorant people are apt to entertain against capitalists and corporations. But the feeling was in the main wholesome. There was really very good reason for fearing that a great financial institution, so intimately related to the government, might be made a most formidable engine of political corruption. The final result of the struggle, in Tyler's presidency, showed that Jackson was supported by the sound common sense of the American people.

Jackson's suggestions with reference to the bank in his first message met with little favour, especially as he coupled them with suggestions for the distribution of the surplus revenue among the states. He returned to the attack in his two following messages, until, in 1832, the bank felt obliged in self-defence to apply, somewhat prematurely, for a renewal of its charter on the expiration of its term. Charges brought against



the bank by Democratic representatives were investigated by a committee, which returned a majority report in favour of the bank. A minority report sustained the charges. After prolonged discussion the bill to renew the charter passed both houses and July 10, 1832, was vetoed by the President. An attempt to pass the bill over the veto failed of the requisite two-thirds majority.

Circumstances had already given a flavour of personal contest to Jackson's assaults upon the bank. There was no man whom he hated so fiercely as Clay, who was at the same time his chief political rival. Clay made the mistake of forcing the bank question into the foreground, in the belief that it was an issue upon which he was likely to win in the coming presidential campaign. Clay's movement was an invitation to the people to defeat Jackson in order to save the bank; and this naturally aroused all the combativeness in Jackson's nature. His determined stand impressed upon the popular imagination the picture of a dauntless "tribune of the people" fighting against the "monster monopoly." Clay unwisely attacked the veto power of the President, and thus gave Benton an opportunity to defend it by analogies drawn from the veto power of the ancient Roman tribune, which in point of fact it does not at all resemble. The discussion helped Jackson more than Clay. It was also a mistake on the part of the Whig leader to risk the permanence of such an institution as the United States Bank upon the fortunes of a presidential campaign. It dragged the bank into politics in spite of itself, and by thus affording justification for the fears to which Jackson had appealed, played directly into

his hands. In this campaign all the candidates were for the first time nominated in national conventions. There were three conventions, all held at Baltimore. In September, 1831, the anti-masons nominated William Wirt of Virginia, in the hope of getting the National Republicans or Whigs to unite with them, but the latter, in December, nominated Clay. In the following March the Democrats nominated Jackson, with Van Buren for Vice-president. During the year 1832 the action of Congress and President, with regard to the bank charter, was virtually a part of the campaign. In the election South Carolina voted for candidates of her own, John Floyd of Virginia and Henry Lee of Massachusetts. There were 219 electoral votes for Jackson, 49 for Clay, 11 for Floyd, and 7 for Wirt. Besides his own state, Clay carried Maryland and Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. All the rest of the country, including half of New England, went for Jackson. He interpreted this overwhelming victory as a popular condemnation of the bank and approval of all his actions as President. The enthusiastic applause from all quarters which now greeted his rebuke of the nullifiers served still further to strengthen his belief in himself as a "saviour of society" and champion of "the people." Men were getting into a state of mind in which questions of public policy were no longer argued upon their merits, but all discussion was drowned in cheers for Jackson. Such a state of things was not calculated to check his natural vehemence and disposition to override all obstacles in carrying his point. He now felt it to be his sacred duty to demolish the bank. In his next message to

Congress he created some alarm by expressing doubts as to the bank's solvency, and recommending an investigation to see if the deposits of public money were safe. In some parts of the country there were indications of a run upon the branches of the bank. The Committee on Ways and Means investigated the matter and reported the bank as safe and sound, but a minority report threw doubt upon these conclusions, so that the public uneasiness was not allayed. The conclusions of the members of the committee, indeed, bore little reference to the evidence before them, and were determined purely by political partisanship. Jackson made up his mind that the deposits must be removed from the bank. The act of 1816, which created that institution, provided that the public funds might be removed from it by order of the Secretary of the Treasury, who must, however, inform Congress of his reasons for the removal. As Congress resolved, by heavy majorities, that the deposits were safe in the bank, the spring of 1833 was hardly a time when a Secretary of the Treasury would feel himself warranted, in accordance with the provisions of the act, to order their removal. Secretary McLane was accordingly unwilling to issue such an order. In what followed, Jackson had the zealous coöperation of Kendall and Blair. In May McLane was transferred to the State Department, and was succeeded in the treasury by W. J. Duane of Pennsylvania. The new secretary, however, was convinced that the removal was neither necessary nor wise, and in spite of the President's utmost efforts refused either to issue the order or to resign his office. In September, accordingly, Duane was removed and R. B. Taney of Maryland appointed

in his place. Taney at once ordered that after the 1st of October the public revenues should no longer be deposited with the national bank, but with sundry state banks, which soon came to be known as the "pet banks." Jackson alleged, as one chief reason for this proceeding, that if the bank were to continue to receive public revenues on deposit, it would unscrupulously use them in buying up all the members of Congress, and thus securing an indefinite renewal of its charter. This, he thought, would be a death-blow to free government in America. His action caused intense excitement and some commercial distress, and prepared the way for further disturbance. In the next session of the Senate Clay introduced a resolution of censure, which was carried after a debate which lasted all winter. It contained a declaration that the President had assumed "authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both." Jackson protested against the resolution, but the Senate refused to receive his protest. Many of his appointments were rejected by the Senate, especially those of the directors of the bank and of Taney as Secretary of the Treasury. An attempt was made to curtail the President's appointing power. On the other hand, many of the President's friends declaimed against the Senate as an aristocratic institution which ought to be abolished. Benton was Jackson's most powerful and steadfast ally in the Senate. Benton was determined that the resolution of censure should be expunged from the records of that body, and his motion continued to be the subject of acrimonious debate for two years. The contest was carried into the state elections, and some senators

resigned in consequence of instructions received from their state legislatures. At length, January 16, 1837, a few weeks before Jackson's retirement from office, Benton's persistency triumphed and the resolution of censure was expunged. It has been customary with Whig writers to laugh at Benton for this, and to call his conduct spiteful, boyish, and silly. It would be more instructive, however, to observe that his conduct was the natural outgrowth of the extreme theory of popular government which he held. He looked upon Jackson as a disinterested tribune of the people, who for carrying out the popular will and ridding the country of an exceedingly dangerous institution, at the cost of some slight disregard of red tape, had incurred unmerited censure; and it seemed to him an important matter, and not a mere idle punctilio, that such a wrongful verdict should be reversed. There was a good deal of truth, as well as some error, in this view. If pushed to extremes it would result in unbridled democracy, which in the hands of a powerful and unscrupulous leader is liable to pass into Cæsarism. Webster and the Whigs, in opposing this extreme view of popular government, in contending for the necessity of constitutional checks in such a country as ours, and in blaming Jackson for his autocratic manner of overriding such checks, were quite right. At the same time there can be little doubt that Jackson was purely disinterested, and that in this particular case he did fully represent the will of the people in overthrowing a dangerous institution. The commercial panic which followed in 1837 was by most people attributed to his removal of the deposits. I shall endeavour to show, in my next lecture, on "Tip-

pecanoe and Tyler too," that this notion was entirely incorrect, and the causes of the great panic lay much deeper than was supposed at the time. The belief that it was due to Jackson's policy was a chief cause of the Whig victory in 1840; but as soon as the immediate effects of the panic were over, there was a general acquiescence in the final death-blow dealt to the bank by President Tyler, and since then nobody has had the hardihood to ask that it should be restored.

In foreign affairs Jackson's administration won great credit through its enforcement of the French spoliation claims. European nations which had claims for damages against France, on account of spoliations committed by French cruisers during the Napoleonic wars, had found no difficulty after the peace of 1815 in obtaining payment; but the claims of the United States had been superciliously neglected. In 1831, after much fruitless negotiation, a treaty was made by which France agreed to pay the United States five million dollars in six annual instalments. The first payment was due February 2, 1833. A draft for the amount was presented to the French minister of finance, and payment was refused on the ground that no appropriation for that purpose had been made by the Chambers. Louis Philippe brought the matter before the Chambers, but no appropriation was made. Jackson was not the man to be trifled with in this way. In his message of December, 1834, he gravely recommended to Congress that a law be passed authorizing the capture of French vessels enough to make up the amount due. The French government was enraged, and threatened war unless the President should apologize, — not a hopeful sort of demand to make of Andrew

Jackson. Here Great Britain interposed with good advice to France, which led to the payment of the claim without further delay. The effect of Jackson's attitude was not lost upon European governments, while at home the hurrahs for "Old Hickory" were louder than ever. The days when foreign powers could safely insult us were evidently gone by.

In the election of 1836 Jackson's wishes were fulfilled in the victory of Van Buren, with 170 electoral votes against 124 for all other candidates. The remainder of Jackson's life was spent in his Tennessee home, known as the Hermitage. About the time of his election to the presidency the ugly wound received in the duel with Dickinson in 1806, which had never properly healed, broke out afresh and became more and more troublesome, until his most intimate friends were inclined to attribute to it his death, which occurred on the 3d of June, 1845. Throughout his extraordinary career he had been devoutly religious, and one cannot fully comprehend him without taking into account the element of the Puritan person that was so strong in him. There probably never lived a man more strictly conscientious, according to his own somewhat narrow lights, than Andrew Jackson. Whether he ever felt moved to forgive his enemies may be doubted, for it never occurred to him that he was not in the right. A contrite spirit he can hardly have had, but after all his warfare he sank peacefully to rest. His remarkable influence over the common people had not ceased with his presidency, and it survived his death until it ended in a kind of Barbarossa legend quite rare among such a people as ours. To this day, we are told, there is some happy valley in western Pennsylvania, the precise

locality of which is not too strictly indicated, where old men every fourth year, in the month of November, still hobble to the polls and drop into the ballot-box their loyal vote for Andrew Jackson !

The period of Jackson's presidency was one of the most remarkable in the history of the world, and nowhere more remarkable than in the United States. It was signalized by the introduction and rapid development of railroads, of ocean navigation, of agricultural machines, anthracite coal, and friction matches, of the modern type of daily newspaper, of the beginnings of such cities as Chicago, of the steady immigration from Europe, of the rise of the Abolitionists and other reformers, and of the blooming of American literature, when, to the names of Bryant, Cooper, and Irving, were added those of Longfellow, Whittier, Prescott, Holmes, and Hawthorne. The rapid expansion of the country, and the extensive changes in ideas and modes of living, brought to the surface much crudeness of thought and action. As the typical popular hero of such a period, Andrew Jackson must always remain one of the most picturesque and interesting figures in American history. The crudeness of some of his methods, and the evils that have followed from some of his measures, are obvious enough, and have often been remarked upon. But when it is said that he was utterly ignorant of the true principles of statesmanship, and conducted himself in his presidency like a bull in a china shop ; when it is urged that his election to the presidency was a thing to be lamented, and that we ought never to have had any kind of man for chief magistrate except the kind represented by our first six Presidents,



— one can hardly yield unqualified assent to such propositions. It is a source of legitimate pride that we live in a country where a man may rise from the humblest origins to the most exalted position in which his fellow-countrymen can place him. If it be true that mere chance may bring about such a rise of fortune, it is at least very seldom that such can be the case. Usually it must require such rare qualities of mind and character, such richness of experience and such knowledge of men, as to be more than equivalent to a great deal that is conventionally classed as training and scholarship. No man in his senses will for a moment imagine that the scholarly Sumner could ever have performed the herculean task allotted to Abraham Lincoln. Now in the case of Andrew Jackson, while he was not versed in the history and philosophy of government, it is far from correct to say that there was nothing of the statesman about him. On the contrary, it may be maintained that in nearly all his most important public acts, except those that dealt with the civil service, Jackson was right. His theory of the situation was not reached by scientific methods, but it was sound, and it was much needed. Among the ablest books on government that have ever been written — books that ought to be carefully read and deeply pondered by every intelligent American man and woman — are the three works of Herbert Spencer, entitled “Social Statics,” “The Study of Sociology,” and “Man and the State.” The theory of government set forth in these books is that of the most clear-headed and powerful thinker now living in the world, a man who, moreover, is thinking the thoughts of to-morrow as well as of to-day. In spirit it is most

profoundly American, but not in the sense in which that word was understood by Clay and the Whigs. It was Jackson whose sounder instincts prompted him to a course of action quite in harmony with the highest political philosophy. During the administration of John Quincy Adams there was fast growing up a tendency toward the mollycoddling, old granny theory of government, according to which the ruling powers are to take care of the people, build their roads for them, do their banking for them, rob Peter to pay Paul for carrying on a losing business, and tinker and bemuddle things generally. It was, of course, beyond the power of any man to override a tendency of this sort, but Jackson did much to check it; and still more would have come from his initiative if the questions of slavery and secession had not so soon come up to absorb men's minds and divert attention from everything else. The protective theory of government has too much life in it yet; but without Jackson it would no doubt have been worse. His destruction of the bank was brought about in a way that one cannot wish to see often repeated; but there can be little doubt that it has saved us from a great deal of trouble and danger. By this time the bank, if it had lasted, would probably have become a most formidable engine of corruption.

Herein Jackson was powerfully prompted and aided by Van Buren, who stood in somewhat the same relation to him as Hamilton to Washington. Unquestionably Van Buren had a more philosophical and luminous view of the proper sphere and functions of government, in its relations to the people, than any other American statesman since Jefferson. The mantle

of Jefferson fell upon Van Buren, and it was to Jackson's credit that he took that statesman into his innermost counsels. The soldier-President, though doubtless at first actuated by personal motives, soon found the soundest kind of support.

But it is upon his attitude toward the nullifiers that Jackson's most conspicuous claim to our gratitude is based. The question as to whether the federal Constitution created a nation or not was never really settled until it was settled by war. Previous to Jackson's presidency, people's ideas on the subject were very hazy, and when single states, or sections of the country, grumbled and threatened, nobody knew exactly what ought to be done about it. It was significant that Webster's great speech and Jackson's decisive action should have come so near together. Webster's speech was not only a most masterly summing up of the situation, but for sublime eloquence we must go back to the time of Demosthenes to find its equal. Among the forces that have held the Union together, the intelligent response of the popular mind to that speech, and the strong emotions it awakened, must be assigned a very high place. But, after all, it was only Mr. Webster's speech; it did not create a precedent for action; it was something which a federal executive might see fit to follow, or might not. But from the moment when President Jackson said in substance to the nullifiers, "Gentlemen, if you attempt to put your scheme into practice, I shall consider it an act of war and shall treat it accordingly," from that moment there was no mistaking the significance of the action. It created a precedent which, in the hour of supreme danger, even the puzzled, reluctant, hesitating Buchanan could not

venture to disregard. The recollection of it had much to do with setting men's faces in the right direction in the early days of 1861; and those who lived through that doubting, anxious time will remember how people's thoughts went back to the grim, gaunt figure, long since at peace in the grave, and from many and many a mouth was heard the prayer, O for one hour of Andrew Jackson!



**VIII**

**HARRISON, TYLER  
AND THE WHIG COALITION**



## VIII

### HARRISON, TYLER

#### AND THE WHIG COALITION

It would be hard to find in the whole field of history a subject more interesting in its details or more richly suggestive in its illustrations of broad philosophical principles than the development of political parties in the United States since the adoption of our federal Constitution. It is the story of the rapid expansion of principles and methods of government long practised on a small scale in the townships of New England and the parishes and counties of the Southern states, until they have become adapted to the management of an imperial dominion extending from ocean to ocean. Population has grown with unexampled rapidity, the arts and sciences have achieved such conquests as our grandfathers would have deemed incredible, the growing complexity of modern industry has quite changed the aspect of society, commercial problems have taken on dimensions difficult to grasp, strangers from all parts of the earth come thronging in to share our advantages, while too often they need to be taught the very rudiments of our political methods, vast tracts of wilderness have been subdued, rude villages springing up on distant prairies change as by magic into noble cities, new states endowed with ample liberty of self-government are added to our federal commonwealth, till the constellation is about



to number more than forty stars; yet amid all this huge development of human activity the political structure reared a century ago has increased in elastic strength. In spite of all shortcomings, it has shown itself in grave emergencies equal to the situation, and it has fulfilled with supreme efficiency the first duty of government, the duty of preserving order and inspiring confidence. While it has once been called upon to deal with a convulsion as formidable as ever threatened the existence of a nation, its success in overcoming the evil has been such as to convince us more than ever of its invincible strength; and our trust in it reaches sublimity when shown in the profound quiet which attends upon a presidential election in which eleven million votes are cast and the administration of affairs passes from one party to another. People in the Old World often allude to American things as if bigness were their only noticeable attribute. But in the physical dimensions of the facts here cited there is deep moral significance. They furnish unimpeachable testimony to the essential soundness of American political life, and justify us in looking forward with hope to the future. Without for a moment underrating the perils that beset us, or the serious obstacles to right living that are yet to be overcome, we feel that the success already achieved is such that we may confront these dangers and hindrances with cheerful courage.

If the partisan view of American politics were correct, no such sound development of national life would have been possible in this country. According to the partisan theory, which we may find daily expounded in the newspapers and which makes every fourth year the occasion for so much vapid rhetoric and so many

shameless lies, — according to this theory, all the political intelligence, all the public virtue, all the patriotism, in the United States are confined to one-half of the people, while the other half are not only unintelligent and unscrupulous, but actuated by an unaccountable preference for foreign over American interests. According to this theory American party strife is a phase of the everlasting struggle between Ormuzd and Ahri-man, and all means, fair or foul, must be called into requisition in order to suppress the evil spirit and keep him in outer darkness. Under the influence of such a theory men's consciences are often at election time reconciled to tricks which in more sober moments they would promptly condemn. Yet in the main the good sense of the American people has kept them from acting upon such a one-sided view of the case; and it is for this reason that our political history has not been, like that of the old Italian republics, a dismal record of wholesale proscriptions and reversals of policy, culminating in the loss of authority on the part of the government and of liberty on the part of the citizens. To insure the stability of a civilized state, it is necessary that the liberty of individuals and the authority of the community should be alike sustained; and to this end nature seems to have made provision that in a free society, where people's thoughts and wishes can find ready expression, a fair balance shall be preserved between the votes that would extend the powers of government and those that would limit them. Says the sentry in "Iolanthe,"

"I often think it comical,  
How Nature always does contrive  
That every boy and every gal,

That's born into the world alive,  
Is either a little Liberal  
Or else a little Conservative."

If we were to take a hint from mathematical physics we might regard this curious fact as a case under the general law of deviations from an average. Out of a thousand shots fired at a target the deviations in the one direction will very nearly counterbalance those in the other. So in a political society, where free aim can be taken toward the course of action most beneficial to the community, the distribution of opinions will be found to follow the same law. The line of average deviation will be swayed now a little to one side, now a little to the other, and the resultant course will be remarkably steady; it will express itself in what we call a conservative and moderate policy. For this reason there is no form of political society so strong, so peaceful, so adaptable, so likely to endure, as an intelligent democracy. It is repression that calls forth radicalism. It is in the unwholesome soil of despotism that anarchist weeds spring up. When the states general are not assembled for nearly two centuries, and class legislation meanwhile goes on briskly, it is time to look out for a reign of terror.

In American history the revolutions which have been dreaded by many good people, when there has occurred a change of party supremacy, as in 1801, in 1829, and in 1885, have in general not happened. In the single instance in which a violent convulsion has resulted, in 1861, the exception was of the kind that proves the rule, for the trouble was caused by the existence of negro slavery, an institution utterly incompatible with the spirit of true democracy. In the other

instances moderation has prevailed for two reasons: *first*, the winning party has usually owed its victory to the transfer of relatively independent votes from the opposite party, and such transferred votes are likely to act as a potent conservative influence with the winning party; *secondly*, there are certain instincts which govern the party in power as a responsible agent, and certain other instincts which govern the party in opposition as an irresponsible critic; and when the party in opposition becomes the party in power, it passes under the sway of the former group of instincts, and any tendency to push matters to extremes is thus powerfully checked. These points were illustrated in the administration of Jefferson. The Republican victory of 1800 was won partly by the aid of Federalist votes that in 1796 had been given to Adams. The strong Federalist measures of Hamilton had now been for several years in successful operation; they had become part of our system of government, and to have laid violent hands upon them would have been to transfer thousands of votes back to the Federalists in 1804. Moreover, when Jefferson came to be responsible for the conduct of affairs, he could feel the usefulness of many features in the Federalist scheme which he had formerly opposed. As a Republican and a strict constructionist Jefferson had no right to double, and more than double, the area of the United States by the purchase of Louisiana. So we see him becoming a most hardy loose constructionist for the occasion, and pushing the doctrine of "implied powers" to an extreme from which the Federalists shrink back in horror. For the next dozen years we see the Republican party absorbing and

appropriating what was best in Federalism, and becoming more and more the national party, while the Federalists, losing their hold upon the people, sink into the position of a sectional party and at length dwindle into a faction. First it was John Quincy Adams, prince and protagonist of mugwumps, who upheld Jefferson in the embargo; then it was Daniel Webster, who refused to lend countenance to the Hartford convention; and so the great party of Washington and Hamilton went to pieces until, in 1820, the victors could afford to be magnanimous, and Rufus King was reëlected to the United States Senate through the aid of Martin Van Buren. As Federalist candidate for the presidency in 1816, King had received the electoral votes of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Delaware. In 1820 there was no candidate to take the field against Monroe. In 1824 the four candidates were so-called Republicans. In 1828 the election of Jackson over Adams was the victory of the West over the East, of the backwoodsman over the Harvard professor, of the so-called "man of the people" over the so-called "aristocrat," rather than the victory of one definite and avowed scheme of public policy over another. Nevertheless, by 1828, the old issues having disappeared, new issues had arisen, and were really, though perhaps not distinctly, involved in the election. The administration of Adams had raised such new issues. The rapid settlement of the Western country was revealing the urgent need of better means of communication. The genius of George Stephenson had already devised the means of dealing with such a problem, and private enterprise, laying thousands of miles of iron rails, was soon to supply the need most

effectually. But meanwhile it was quite natural that President Adams should take his cue from the wonderful roads and bridges and aqueducts built by the ancient Romans with money raised by taxation, and insist that Americans might well do likewise and thus bring together the distant sections of their vast country. This was the policy of "internal improvements." The end aimed at was a broad, a national, a noble end. It was only the method of attaining it that was questionable. There were some who deemed it a method more in harmony with the political ideas of ancient Romans than with those of modern Americans; but before the question could be settled by political argument the immense capabilities of private enterprise had been so clearly demonstrated that, for the most part, the policy of "internal improvements" has had to stand upon the defensive.

This was one of the leading issues raised during the administration of John Quincy Adams. Closely connected with it was the question of the tariff. Since the War of 1812 had made it difficult to obtain manufactured goods from abroad, the scarcity had served as a stimulus to sundry American manufactures, and the protectionist theory had begun to make powerful converts, among them Henry Clay. Mr. Clay advocated the policy of raising by protective duties more revenue than was needed for the ordinary expenses of administration, in order that there might be a surplus to be spent in building roads and dredging rivers; and he recommended this policy to many people by baptizing it "the American system." Then there was the question as to the continuance of the national bank, in which the government was

itself a stockholder. This did not become a burning question until late in Jackson's first term. The extent to which old Federalist ideas had been adopted or acquiesced in by the Republicans was well shown in the fact that the bill for rechartering the bank in 1816 was signed by President Madison. But Madison's acquiescence was largely due to the want of any definite alternative policy; and there were many who regarded the bank rather as a temporary make-shift, to be endured for the moment, than as a beneficent institution to be fastened permanently upon the country.

Upon these three great questions of internal improvements, tariff, and bank, the all-embracing Republican party became divided between 1824 and 1832. The followers of Adams and Clay came to be distinguished as National Republicans, and this title indicated their strong point. Their policy commended itself, not only to those who believed it to be economically sound, but to many more who felt it desirable that above all things the national government should be strong. Such people inherited the tendencies of the original Federalists. They were inclined to construe liberally the implied powers of the Constitution, because they felt that the government needed such implied powers, in order to ward off the dangers of nullification and secession which were then looming upon the horizon. This was the strong point of the National Republicans. It was this that gave them the powerful support of Mr. Webster, who was by no means blind to the economic unsoundness of the so-called American system. On the other hand, those who now began acting in

opposition to the National Republicans at length accepted the name of Democrats, which had formerly been applied to Jefferson's followers by their opponents as a term of disparagement. In the days when Jefferson led the opposition, and the guillotine was at work in Paris, the word *democracy* seemed to smack of Jacobinism; but in the days when Andrew Jackson stood for government by the people, it had a pleasant sound. The Democrats were right in thinking themselves the genuine followers of Jefferson, and they saw clearly the weak side of the National Republicans, whose doctrines of tariff, bank, and improvements opened the door for limitless jobbery and iniquitous class legislation, and might easily become fraught with serious danger to government by the people and for the people.

The new division between parties in Jackson's first term was not accomplished in a moment. People did not at once array themselves in opposite ranks. There was doubt and hesitation. General principles were then, as now, complicated and obscured by real or fancied local interests. But by 1832 the Democrats had become solidly welded together into a party with a rational and well-defined policy, and with leaders of great ability and influence, as variously exemplified in Jackson, Benton, Van Buren, and Blair. They were opposed to the theory of paternal government which formulated itself in internal improvements, tariff, and bank; and in order to sustain their position, they were inclined to construe the Constitution strictly, and maintain that its implied powers did not extend so far as to justify such a theory.



Our survey of the political situation in 1832 is however, not yet complete. We have not yet taken into the account the peculiar relations of the people of the Southern states toward the two new parties, as it was affected, whether directly or indirectly, whether avowedly or tacitly, by the existence of their peculiar institution, negro slavery. From the outset Southern politicians were quick in perceiving that the security of their system of slavery depended upon that interpretation of the Constitution which should restrict as far as possible the implied powers to be exercised by the federal government. Herein, as strict constructionists, they might seem to have been in harmony with the Jackson Democrats as against the National Republicans. But there was no such harmony. When South Carolina in 1832 flung into the political arena the gauntlet of nullification, she found Jackson and his Democrats even more stanch in defence of the Union than Clay and his National Republicans. At that supreme moment Daniel Webster, whose political existence was identified with defence of the Union, was in alliance with Jackson, while Clay was dallying and temporizing with Calhoun. In order to explain this we must take our start from the South, and see how the political situation in 1832 presented itself to the Southern people. We know what was the attitude of Calhoun and of South Carolina. They represented the impulse which thirty years later drove the Southern people into rebellion. But there was also in the Southern states a mass of political beliefs and sentiments which, without agreeing with Calhoun and with South Carolina, agreed still less with Jackson and Webster and the North. If we would under-

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stand the course of events that led to the overthrow of the Democrats in 1840, we must look for a moment into the history of this current of Southern opinion that was loath to go with Calhoun, but felt itself in honour bound to make protest against coercion as threatened by President Jackson. It was the same current of opinion and sentiment that in 1861 was loath to go with Jefferson Davis, but felt itself in honour bound to resist coercion as exercised by President Lincoln. There was much of this feeling in the South, and it was especially strong in the border states. It would never take the lead in a movement toward secession, but might easily be driven into such a movement as a choice between conflicting alternatives. Nowhere was this feeling stronger than in Virginia, and in no public man was it more completely exemplified than in John Tyler, tenth President of the United States. For studying the sources and the growth of this feeling, there is no better text-book than the "Letters and Times of the Tylers," — two stout octavos published at Richmond in 1884 and 1885, edited by one of the President's younger sons, Mr. Lyon Gardiner Tyler, president of William and Mary College. This interesting book gives us a sketch of the political history of the United States for a hundred years, as viewed by the intelligent and public-spirited members of one of the leading families of Virginia. The elder John Tyler, born in 1747, was associated with Madison in 1785 in the resolution which secured a conference of delegates at Annapolis in the following year, and thus led the way toward the federal Convention. When the federal Constitution was laid before the people,

however, Mr. Tyler was one of those who thought that it encroached too much upon state rights, and in the state convention of 1788 he was conspicuous among the opponents of ratification. He was one of those, moreover, who believed that the assent of Virginia to the Constitution could not have been secured but for the belief of many of the delegates that the right of the state to withdraw peaceably from the Union, in case it should ever see fit to do so, was not really surrendered. For the twenty years from 1788 to 1808 Mr. Tyler was judge of the general court of Virginia, from 1808 to 1811 he was governor of Virginia, and from 1811 until his death in 1813 he was judge of the United States district court for Virginia. His son, the future President, was born at the homestead at Greenway, on the 29th of March, 1790. In early boyhood he attended the small school kept by a Mr. McMurdo, who was so diligent in his use of the birch that in later years President Tyler said "it was a wonder he did not whip all the sense out of his scholars." At the age of eleven young Tyler was one of the ringleaders in a rebellion in which the despotic McMurdo was overpowered by numbers, tied hand and foot, and left locked up in the schoolhouse until late at night, when a passing traveller effected an entrance and released him. On complaining to Judge Tyler, the indignant schoolmaster was met with the apt reply, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" The future President was graduated at William and Mary in 1807. At college he showed a strong interest in ancient history. He was also fond of poetry and music, and, like Thomas Jefferson, was a skilful performer on the violin. In 1809

he was admitted to the bar, and had already begun to obtain a good practice when he was elected to the legislature, and took his seat in that body in December, 1811. He was here a firm supporter of Mr. Madison's administration, and the war with Great Britain, which soon followed, afforded him an opportunity to become conspicuous as a forcible and persuasive orator. One of his earliest public acts is especially interesting in view of the famous struggle with the Whigs, which in later years he conducted as President. The charter of the first bank of the United States, established in 1791, was to expire in twenty years, and in 1811 the question of renewing the charter came before Congress. The bank was very unpopular in Virginia, and the assembly of that state, by a vote of 125 to 35, instructed its senators at Washington, Richard Brent and William E. Giles, to vote against a recharter. The instructions denounced the bank as an institution, in the founding of which Congress had exceeded its powers and grossly violated state rights. Yet there were many in Congress who, without approving the principle upon which the bank was founded, thought the eve of war an inopportune season for making a radical change in the financial system of the nation. Of the two Virginia senators, Brent voted in favour of the recharter, and Giles spoke on the same side, and although, in obedience to instructions, he voted contrary to his own opinion, he did so under protest. On January 14, 1812, Mr. Tyler, in the Virginia legislature, introduced resolutions of censure, in which the senators were taken to task, while the Virginia doctrines, as to the unconstitutional char-

acter of the bank and the binding force of instructions, were formally asserted.

Mr. Tyler was reëlected to the legislature annually, until in November, 1816, he was chosen to fill a vacancy in the United States House of Representatives. In the regular election to the next Congress, out of two hundred votes given in his native county, he received all but one. As a member of Congress he soon made himself conspicuous as the most rigid of strict constructionists. When Mr. Calhoun introduced his bill in favour of internal improvements, Mr. Tyler voted against it. He also voted against the proposal for a national bankrupt act. He condemned, as arbitrary and insubordinate, the course of General Jackson in Florida, and contributed an able speech to the long debate over the question as to censuring that gallant commander. He was a member of a committee for inquiring into the affairs of the national bank, and his most elaborate speech was in favour of Mr. Trimble's motion to issue a *scire facias* against that institution. On all these points Mr. Tyler's course seems to have pleased his constituents; in the spring election of 1819 he did not consider it necessary to issue the usual circular address, or in any way to engage in a personal canvass. He simply distributed copies of his speech against the bank, and was reëlected to Congress unanimously.

The most important question that came before the sixteenth Congress related to the admission of Missouri to the Union. In the debates over this question, Mr. Tyler took extreme ground against the imposition of any restrictions upon the extension of slavery. At the same time he declared himself on

principle opposed to the perpetuation of slavery, and he sought to reconcile these positions by the argument that in diffusing the slave population over a wide area the evils of the institution would be diminished and the prospects of ultimate emancipation increased. "Slavery," said he, "has been represented on all hands as a dark cloud, and the candour of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Whitman) drove him to the admission that it would be well to disperse this cloud. In this sentiment I entirely concur with him. How can you otherwise disarm it? Will you suffer it to increase in its darkness over one particular portion of this land, till its horrors shall burst upon it? Will you permit the lightnings of its wrath to break upon the South, when by the interposition of a wise system of legislation you may reduce it to a summer's cloud?" New York and Pennsylvania, he argued, had been able to emancipate their slaves only because they were so few. Dispersion, moreover, would be likely to ameliorate the condition of the black man, for by making his labour scarce in each particular locality, it would increase the demand for it, and would thus make it the interest of the master to deal fairly and generously with his slaves. To the obvious objection that the increase of the slave population would fully keep up with its territorial expansion, he replied by denying that such would be the case. His next argument ~~was~~ that if an old state, such as Virginia, could have slaves, while a new state, such as Missouri, was to be prevented by federal authority from having them, then the old and new states would at once be placed upon a different footing, which was contrary to the spirit of the Constitution. If Congress could thus

impose one restriction upon a state, where was the exercise of such a power to end? Once grant such a power, and what was to prevent a slaveholding majority in Congress from forcing slavery upon some territory where it was not wanted? Mr. Tyler pursued the argument so far as to deny "that Congress, under its constitutional authority to establish rules and regulations for the territories, had any control whatever over slavery in the territorial domain." He was unquestionably foremost among the members of Congress in occupying this extreme position. When the Missouri Compromise bill was adopted by a vote of 134 to 42, all but 5 of the nays were from the South, and from Virginia alone there were 17, of which Mr. Tyler's vote was one. The *Richmond Enquirer* of March 7, 1820, in denouncing the compromise, observed, in language of prophetic interest, that the Southern and Western representatives now "owe it to themselves to keep their eyes firmly fixed on Texas; if we are cooped up on the north, we must have elbow-room to the west."

Mr. Tyler's further action in this Congress related chiefly to the question of a protective tariff, of which he was an unflinching opponent. In 1821, finding his health seriously impaired, he declined a reëlection, and returned to private life. His retirement, however, was of short duration, for in 1823 he was again elected to the Virginia legislature. Here, as a friend to the candidacy of Mr. Crawford for the presidency, he disapproved the attacks upon the congressional caucus begun by the legislature of Tennessee in the interests of Andrew Jackson. The next year he was nominated to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate, but

Littleton Tazewell was elected over him. He opposed an attempt which was made about this time to remove William and Mary College to Richmond, and was afterward made successively rector and chancellor of the college, which prospered signally under his management. In December, 1825, he was chosen by the legislature to the governorship of Virginia, and in the following year he was reëlected by a unanimous vote. As the strict constructionists were now becoming gradually united in opposition to the policy of President Adams, many members of Crawford's party, under the lead of John Randolph, went to swell the ranks of the Jacksonians, while others, among whom Mr. Tyler was one of the most distinguished, maintained a certain independence in opposition. It is to be set down to Mr. Tyler's credit that he never attached any importance to the malicious story, believed by so many Jacksonians, of a corrupt bargain between Adams and Clay. A slander of somewhat similar character was soon to be aimed at himself. Soon after the meeting of the Virginia legislature, in December, 1826, the friends of Clay and Adams combined with the members of the opposite party who could no longer endure Randolph's crazy freaks, and thus Governor Tyler was elected to the United States Senate by the narrow majority of 115 votes to 110. Some indiscreet friends of Jackson now sought to show that there must have been some secret and reprehensible understanding between Tyler and Clay, but the attempt failed utterly. It is very interesting, however, to observe that Tyler owed his seat in the Senate to the followers of the man with whom he was hereafter to enter into such an extraordinary alliance.



In the Senate Mr. Tyler took a conspicuous stand against the so-called "tariff of abominations," which even Benton and Van Buren, who were not yet in 1828 quite clear as to their proper attitude, were induced to support. There was thus some ground for Tyler's opinion, expressed at this time, that the Jacksonians were not really orthodox defenders of strict construction. It was on the occasion of Jackson's famous veto of the Maysville turnpike bill, May 27, 1830, that this most rigorous stickler for constitutional propriety found himself for the moment drawn toward the President. It was quite proper and characteristic for him to attack the irregularity of Jackson's appointment of commissioners to negotiate a commercial treaty with Turkey, without duly informing the Senate; but at the same time he showed good will toward the President by voting in favour of confirming the appointment of Van Buren as minister to Great Britain. In the presidential election of 1832 he supported Jackson, but only as a less objectionable candidate than Clay, Wirt, or Floyd. The preference accorded to Jackson over Floyd would indicate that the President's immortal Union toast had not seriously alarmed Mr. Tyler, who disapproved of nullification and condemned the course of South Carolina as rash and ill-considered. Herein Tyler was wiser than Calhoun. On the question of the tariff the South had really a strong case, and to throw the gauntlet of nullification into the arena was simply to offer the chances of victory to the North. But when it came to suppressing nullification with the strong hand, Mr. Tyler's attitude was curiously significant. He was emphatic in his opposition to President Jackson's proclamation. He denounced it as a "tremen-

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dous engine of federalism," tending toward the "consolidation" of the states into a single political body. His attitude in 1833 was substantially the same as in 1861, when secession had become a grim reality. In the earlier crisis, as in the later, he tried to stand upon the ground that while secession might be wrong, coercion was a greater wrong. This was the mental attitude that in 1861 led Virginia to join the Southern Confederacy and made Mr. Tyler in the last year of his life a member of the Confederate Congress. And as in 1861 the secession of Virginia was preceded by the assembling of a peace convention of border states, with Tyler for its president, so now in 1833 he undertook to play the part of mediator between Clay and Calhoun, and in that capacity earnestly supported the compromise tariff bill introduced by the former in the Senate on the 12th of February. In this measure, which was opposed by Mr. Webster as an ill-timed and mischievous concession to the threats of South Carolina, we may see a premonitory symptom of that alliance between the followers of Tyler and Clay which soon resulted in the formation of the Whig party. At the same time occurred the sudden and decisive break between Tyler and Jackson. In a special message to Congress, the President asked for full and explicit authority to use the army and navy, if need be, for the purpose of suppressing armed insurrection. Congress readily responded with the so-called "Force Bill," and here Mr. Tyler showed that he had the courage of his convictions. When the bill was put to vote in the Senate, on the 20th of February, some of its Southern opponents were conveniently absent, others got up and went out in order to avoid putting themselves on record. The

vote, as then taken, stood: *Yeas*, thirty-two; *Nay*, one, to wit, John Tyler.

It was thus on the question of the right of the federal government to use force in suppressing nullification that the Southern strict constructionists discovered that there was no room for them within the Democratic party as then constituted under the lead of Jackson, Van Buren, Benton, and Blair. In this conclusion the peculiar features of Jackson's attack upon the United States Bank only confirmed them. When it came to the removal of the deposits, Mr. Tyler's break with the administration was thorough and final. As we have seen, he was no friend to the bank; he had fought against it on every fitting occasion, since the beginning of his public career. And now, in 1834, he declared emphatically, "I believe the bank to be the original sin against the Constitution, which, in the progress of our history, has called into existence a numerous progeny of usurpations. Shall I permit this serpent, however bright its scales or erect its mien, to exist by and through my vote?" Nevertheless, strongly as he disapproved of the bank, Mr. Tyler disapproved still more strongly of the methods by which President Jackson assailed it. There seemed at that time to be growing up in the United States a spirit of extreme unbridled democracy quite foreign to the spirit in which our constitutional government, with its carefully arranged checks and limitations, was founded. It was a spirit that prompted mere majorities to insist upon having their way, even at the cost of overriding all constitutional checks and limits. This wild spirit possessed many members of Jackson's party, and it found expression in what Mr. Ben-

ton grotesquely called the "*demos Krateo*" principle. A good illustration of it was to be seen in Benton's argument, after the election of 1824, that Jackson, having received a plurality of electoral votes, ought to be declared President, and that the House of Representatives, in choosing Adams, was really "defying the will of the people." In similar wise President Jackson, after his triumphant reëlection in 1832, was inclined to interpret his huge majorities as meaning that the people were ready to uphold him in any course that he might see fit to pursue. This feeling no doubt strengthened him in his determined attitude toward the nullifiers, and it certainly contributed to his arbitrary and overbearing method of dealing with the bank, culminating, in 1833, in his removal of the deposits. There was ground for maintaining that in this act the President exceeded his powers, and it seemed to illustrate the tendency of unbridled democracy toward practical despotism, under the leadership of a headstrong and popular chief. Mr. Tyler saw in it such a tendency, and he believed that the only safeguard for constitutional government, whether against the arbitrariness of Jackson or the latitudinarianism of the Whigs, lay in a most rigid adherence to strict constructionist doctrines. Accordingly, in his speech of the 24th of February, 1834, he proposed to go directly to the root of the matter and submit the question of a national bank to the people in the shape of a constitutional amendment, either expressly forbidding or expressly allowing Congress to create such an institution. According to his own account, he found Clay and Webster ready to coöperate with him in this course, while Calhoun held aloof. Nothing came of

the project; but it was now easy to see the alliance fast maturing between the Northern National Republicans and those Southerners who agreed with Tyler. In December, 1834, as member of a committee for investigating the management of the bank, Mr. Tyler brought in an elaborate report which seems to have been a very fair statement of the case. It did not sustain Jackson's charges of mismanagement, and was accordingly attacked by Benton as a partisan defence of the bank. This doubtless served to confuse the minds of people as to Tyler's real attitude. Before the smoke of the battle had cleared away, people would not distinguish between disapproval of Jackson's methods and approval of the bank; they would consider the one as equivalent to the other, and so they did. An incident which occurred the next year served to confirm this view. On Mr. Clay's famous resolution to censure the President for the removal of the deposits, Tyler had voted, along with Webster, in the affirmative. While Benton's resolutions for expunging the vote of censure were before the Senate, the Democratic legislature of Virginia instructed the two senators from that state to vote in the affirmative. As to the binding force of such instructions Mr. Tyler had long ago, in the case of Giles and Brent above mentioned, placed himself unmistakably upon record. His colleague, Benjamin Watkins Leigh, was known to entertain similar views. On receiving the instructions, both senators refused to obey them. Both voted against the expunging resolution, but Leigh kept his seat, while the rigidly consistent Tyler resigned and went home. The result of this for Leigh was to be retirement to private life; for Tyler it was to be elevation to the presidency

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He had already been recommended for the vice-presidency by the legislatures of several Southern states. During the year 1834 the Whig party came into existence. At the North the National Republicans, the party of Clay and Webster, were beginning to call themselves Whigs; while the Southern strict constructionists gladly took the name of "State Rights Whigs." Between these two wings of the new party there was no bond of union whatever except their common hostility to the Jackson Democrats. Their alliance was as unnatural as that of Fox and North against Lord Shelburne in 1783, or as that of John Bright with Lord Salisbury against Mr. Gladstone scarcely a decade ago. The protective theory of government, with its tariff, bank, and internal improvements, which was the fetich of the Northern Whigs, was to the Southern Whigs a device of Belial. Even in their common hatred of Jackson they did not stand upon common ground; for the Northern Whigs hated him for his stanch opposition to paternal government, while the Southern Whigs hated him for the severity with which he frowned upon nullification. The nearest approach to real sympathy between the two discordant allies was furnished by Tyler and Webster, in so far as they were agreed for the moment in condemning the violence of Jackson's proceedings in the particular case of the bank. And it was in this one point of sympathy that the name "Whig" had its origin. They called themselves Whigs because they saw fit to represent Jackson as a sort of unconstitutional tyrant, like George III., and for a moment they tried to stigmatize Jackson's followers as "Tories," but this device was unsuccessful.

The alliance was so unnatural that it took some time to complete it. In 1836 there was no agreement upon a candidate for the presidency. The "State Rights" Whigs nominated Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee for President, and John Tyler for Vice-president. The Northern Whigs, in the hope of gathering votes from as many quarters as possible, thought it best to put forward some more colourless candidate than their real leader, Mr. Clay, and accordingly they nominated General William Henry Harrison. This gentleman was born in Berkeley, Virginia, February 9, 1773. His father, Benjamin Harrison, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was twice elected governor of Virginia, and in the state convention of 1788 was allied with the elder Tyler in opposing the adoption of the federal Constitution. William Henry Harrison was educated at Hampden Sidney College, Virginia, but broke off his studies in 1791 to take a commission in the army on the Western frontier, commanded by Anthony Wayne. Having distinguished himself for gallantry and for executive ability, he was in 1800 appointed superintendent of Indian affairs and governor of the Indiana territory, comprising the present states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. He held that office for several years, and when the Indian War broke out prematurely, in 1811, he defeated Tecumseh's brother, the Prophet, on the 7th of November of that year, in a bloody and decisive battle at Tippecanoe, on the upper Wabash. In the autumn of 1812 he was appointed to the chief command of the United States forces in the Northwest, and on October 5, 1813, he won the battle of the

Thames over the allied British and Indians commanded by General Proctor and Tecumseh. This battle, in which Tecumseh was killed and nearly the whole British force surrendered, was decisive of the war in the Northwest, and the two victories gave General Harrison a military reputation second only to Jackson's. In 1816-1819 he was a member of Congress. In 1819 he was chosen to the senate of Ohio, and in 1822 was again a candidate for Congress, but was defeated because of his vote against the admission of Missouri to the Union as a free state. In 1824 he was chosen to the United States Senate, in 1828 President Adams sent him out as minister to the United States of Colombia, and in the following year he was recalled by President Jackson, and retired to his farm at North Bend, near Cincinnati. He was a good soldier and a thoroughly upright and trustworthy man. Upon the political questions that were dividing Whigs from Democrats in 1836, he had done little or nothing to commit himself, and in nominating him for the presidency the Whigs sought to turn to their own uses the same kind of popular enthusiasm by which Jackson had profited. But the ill-organized opposition had no chance of winning a victory over the solid Democratic column. Many votes were thrown away. South Carolina, still fighting her own battle, voted for Person Mangum, a State Rights Whig. Massachusetts voted for Daniel Webster. Mr. White obtained the 11 votes of Georgia and the 15 of Tennessee, for the latter state, in spite of her reverence for Jackson, did not approve his policy of coercion and could not be induced to support Van Buren. General Harrison carried Vermont,



New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana,—in all 73 votes. The opposition had hoped that, with so many candidates in the field, there would be enough bolting and scattering to prevent a choice by the people, and throw the election into the House of Representatives. But Mr. Van Buren won an easy victory. He received 170 electoral votes, a majority of 46 over the other candidates taken together. The result of the canvass for the vice-presidency was curious. Colonel Richard Johnson, the Democratic candidate, obtained exactly half the number of votes in the electoral college, so that there was no choice. For the only time in our history the election devolved upon the Senate, which proceeded to choose Colonel Johnson. What more especially concerns us here is the vote for Mr. Tyler. He failed to carry his own state, for Virginia was now firmly Democratic, and remained so until 1860; but he ran ahead of his fellow-candidate, Mr. White, and, besides Tennessee and Georgia, he received the votes of Maryland and South Carolina.

The result of this election left Mr. Tyler for the next two years in retirement, but one opinion of his, very clearly pronounced at this time, is worth quoting as an illustration of the independence of judgment which he sometimes manifested. The followers of Calhoun were bringing forward in Congress what was known as the “gag resolution” against all petitions and motions relating in any way to the abolition of slavery. Mr. Tyler condemned this measure as impolitic on the part of the slaveholders, because it yoked together the question as to the right of petition and the question as to slavery, and thus, by presenting the slave power

as hostile to free speech, gave a distinct moral advantage to the Abolitionists. The spirit of slavery, however, was true to its own barbarous instincts when it rejected this prudent counsel.

In the spring of 1838 Mr. Tyler was returned to the Virginia legislature, and in the following winter his friends put him forward for reëlection to the United States Senate. In the memorable contest that ensued, in which William Rives was his principal competitor, the result was a complete deadlock, so that the legislature adjourned without making a choice.

Meanwhile the financial crisis of 1837—the most severe that has ever been known in this country—had wrecked the administration of President Van Buren. It was believed at the time that this frightful tempest in the commercial world was wholly or chiefly due to Jackson's assaults upon the United States Bank, and this opinion has been so confidently stated as a fact, and so often reiterated, that it has come to be one of the commonplaces of history. Yet, like many other commonplace assertions in history, it is only partially true. The causes of the panic of 1837 lay deeper than any acts of any administration. The seeds of distress had been so plentifully sown that an abundant crop must have been garnered about that time, no matter whether a Whig or a Democrat were occupant of the White House, no matter whether the public funds were deposited in one great bank or in fifty small ones. Since 1820 the increase of the country in wealth and population, and the rapidity of expansion westward, had been wonderful. Tennessee had nearly doubled in population, Ohio had more than doubled, Indiana had more than trebled, Mississippi had increased four-

fold, Missouri fivefold, Illinois sevenfold, Michigan twentyfold. A transformation was going on in the cities. In 1820 New York and Philadelphia, with populations a little over 100,000, had hardly ceased to look like country towns; by 1835 the former had passed 250,000 and the latter 200,000, so that they were beginning to take on the appearance of large cities. In 1820 the national debt was \$90,000,000; by 1835 every cent of it was paid and there was a surplus in the treasury, a fact which powerfully impressed people's imaginations, both here and in Europe. This prosperity was the cause of endless self-glorification, and it was apt to be ascribed to American institutions in a greater degree than to the natural resources of the country. It began to seem as if nothing were impossible to American enterprise, and confidence grew into recklessness. It was an era of road-building. In 1820 it cost \$88 to carry a ton of freight from Buffalo to Albany; in 1825 the Erie Canal was finished, and that ton could be carried that distance for \$21.50; in 1835 it could be carried for \$6.50. That single fact gave an unprecedented stimulus to the growth alike of New York and of the West. In 1830 there were 23 miles of railroad in the United States; in 1836 there were 1273 miles. During the same six years the steamboat tonnage on our Western rivers increased nearly sixfold, and the cotton crop in the Southwestern states was doubled, while the price of raw cotton rose from ten to twenty cents a pound. Such sudden and surprising changes quite disturbed people's conceptions of value and bewildered them in their calculations. The great West began to seem an El Dorado, and so long as desired land was in some new region, it

acquired an imaginary value, without much reference to its real relations to the development of the country, which, of course, time alone could disclose. The valuation of real estate in Mobile in 1831 was little more than a million dollars; in 1837 it was more than 27 millions; in 1846 it had shrunk to less than 9 millions. Assuming that the increase from a million in 1831 to nearly 9 millions in 1846 represents real growth, we may regard the greater part of the intervening figure of 27 millions as representing the heated fancies of men in the Atlantic states and in Europe anxious to invest their money where it could make them suddenly rich. The extent of the mania in Europe was indicated by the striking fact that although between 1830 and 1837 we bought from foreign countries \$140,000,000 worth of merchandise in excess of what we sold to them, we received from them at the same time \$45,000,000 in specie in excess of what we paid to them. The account was balanced by the shares taken by European capitalists in American enterprises.


This rage for speculation led to immense purchases of Western public lands. At that time any one who chose could buy these lands at the fixed price of \$1.25 per acre, whether he intended to settle upon them or not. Speculators began buying extensive tracts in order to sell them at a greatly advanced price. Between 1820 and 1829 the annual sales of public lands by the United States government averaged about \$1,300,000. Between 1830 and 1834 they averaged from 3 to 5 millions. In 1835 they leaped up to 15 millions, and in 1836 to 25 millions. The money spent in buying these remote unimproved lands, and in taking stock in railroads projected for reaching

them, was thus abstracted from the ordinary and safe occupations of industry and commerce. There was a great demand for ready money, and in the prevailing spirit of boundless confidence it was met by an enormous increase of banks and bank credits. Between 1830 and 1836 the banking capital of the United States rose from 60 to 250 millions, the loans and discounts from 200 to 450 millions, and the note circulation from 60 to 140 millions. Thus the elements of a prodigious commercial crisis were all at hand. There was the wholesale dealing in property that had only fictitious values; there was the wholesale creation of indebtedness, and the attempt to pay it, Micawber-like, with paper promises to pay. Perhaps Jackson's withdrawal of the government deposits from the United States Bank, and distribution of them among fifty state banks, may have helped to increase the mania for speculation; but it is now apparent that the madness was already beyond control and fast hurrying to a crisis.

A far worse measure, for which both parties in Congress were responsible, and which Jackson ought to have vetoed, was the distribution of the surplus. The extinction of the national debt came to diminish the outgo just as the great sales of public lands came to swell the income; and so in 1836 there was a surplus of \$37,000,000, which Congress decided to divide among the states and pay over in four quarterly instalments, beginning on New Year's of 1837. The prospect of this largess simply added to the general craze.

By the summer of 1836 the bubble had been blown to such dimensions as perhaps had not been seen since the celebrated South Sea bubble of 1720. To prick and explode such airy nothings, it is only necessary

that a few purchasers should begin to awake to their delusion and a few creditors should begin to ask for hard cash. By 1836 there were others than Martin Chuzzlewit who had learned to their cost that Aladdin's lamp was not to be found in malarial swamps on the Mississippi. Just then there was a creditor who made demands, and that creditor was the United States government. On the 11th of July the Secretary of the Treasury issued the famous "specie circular," requiring payments for public lands to be made in specie. Stringency of the money market had already begun to be felt, because the issue of paper had not kept pace with the feverish demand. Now the stringency increased with fearful rapidity. The crash began to come when the first quarter of the surplus was paid out by the deposit banks in January. So large a sum of money could not be moved without calling in loans and awakening apprehension. Western banks began calling for specie to pay their debts to the government; confidence died out in Europe, and gold began flowing thither to balance accounts. Prices had become so inflated, and money so hard to get, that mobs in the city of New York shouted for cheap food, and with true mob logic proceeded to destroy a great flour warehouse by way of making flour cheaper. In the course of the spring there was a collapse of prices and a collapse of credit. All over the country the banks suspended payment; great houses and little houses became alike insolvent; widows and orphans who had taken stock in railroads leading to Eden were reduced to live upon charity; coin disappeared, and there was a partial return to barter; a pair of shoes would be paid for in soup tickets or chips



receivable for drinks of whiskey; in some places men found it hard to get work on any terms.

Such in its main outlines was the crisis of 1837. A masterly account of it may be found in Shepard's "Van Buren," a little book which seems to me the ablest in all that excellent series of American Statesmen. We have had greater, more brilliant, more interesting Presidents than Mr. Van Buren; but we have never had one with a more thorough grasp of the principles of political economy, or a more adequate and lucid conception of the proper sphere and duties of government. When Mr. Shepard calls his message to Congress on the occasion of the panic one of the greatest of American state papers, his words are not at all too strong. It was natural that the President should be made the scapegoat for the sins of the people. The Whigs had predicted mischief from the overthrow of the national bank. People now attributed the panic to that cause and to the issue of the specie circular. The mischief, they said, was the work of government, and now government must cure it. A few strokes of President Jackson's pen had wrought all the evil, and it must be undone by a few strokes from President Van Buren's. A new bank must be chartered, the specie circular rescinded, and plenty of paper issued. If Van Buren had yielded to this popular clamour, the crisis would very likely have proved as obstinate as that of 1873, the length of which can plainly be traced to inconvertible paper. In commerce as in medicine, acute mania is easier to deal with than chronic melancholia. Van Buren understood that the disease was not one which government could cure, and he set this forth with admirable courage and force in his message.

So far from advocating a recharter of the bank, he led in the establishment of the present subtreasury system, by which the government is completely divorced from banking. This was the great achievement of his administration. But the Whigs had naturally taken advantage of the troubles to raise a cry for paternal government, and for the moment they found willing listeners everywhere. There was a general revolt against the hard-hearted administration which had done nothing to relieve the distress of the people. For the single purpose of defeating Mr. Van Buren, all differences of policy were subordinated. In the Whig convention at Harrisburg, which met on the 4th of December, 1839, almost a year before the election, no platform of principles was adopted. The unformulated platform was, "Anything to beat Van Buren."<sup>1</sup> It was now the turn of the Whigs to appeal to the frontier prejudices of the West against the aristocratic East by renominating General Harrison, who in the days of Tecumseh and Tippecanoe had lived in a log cabin and had on his table none of your French champagne, but good hard cider. Naturally Mr. Tyler, as a leader of the Southern or State Rights Whigs, was nominated for the vice-presidency. In the uproarious campaign that followed there was less appeal to sober reason and a more prodigal use of claptrap than in any other presidential contest in our history. The chief

<sup>1</sup> A newspaper clipping, preserved by Dr. Fiske, commenting on the heavy shower that fell upon "Bunker Hill Day," tells of a more notable shower that drenched the procession of September 17th, 1840, "the biggest procession up to that date seen in Boston," wetting the Whigs, the correspondent says, "from one end of the line to the other"; but Stephen C. Phillips went into Faneuil Hall the same night and gave the sentiment, "Any rain but the reign of Van Buren."




features were long processions in which log cabins mounted on wheels were dragged about and kegs of hard cider were broached, while in stump speeches the heartless Van Buren was accused of having a silver service on his table and otherwise aping British manners. A kind of lilliburlero was sung, with its chorus:—

“ For Tippecanoe and Tyler too — Tippecanoe and Tyler too ;  
And with them we'll beat little Van, Van.  
Van is a used-up man ;  
And with them we'll beat little Van.”

Thus borne upon a wave of popular excitement, “ Tippecanoe and Tyler too ” were carried to the White House. There were 234 electoral votes for Harrison and 60 for Van Buren. But a glance at the figures of the popular vote shows that then, as always in American politics, the approach to equilibrium was too close for a party to presume too much upon the triumph of the moment. Harrison's vote was 1,275,016; Van Buren's was 1,129,102; and there was a third candidate, James Birney, who obtained only about 7000 votes, and carried no state. He stood for the abolition of negro slavery, and at that moment counted for little.

The inauguration of the new government in March, 1841, brought with it some surprises. Perhaps the only distinct pledge to the people during the clamorous canvass had been the promise of civil service reform. That promise had been definite enough to induce some Democrats to vote for the Whig candidates, but it now appeared that the Whig idea of reform agreed substantially with Jackson's; it was summed up in “ turning the rascals out.” The pressure of office-



seekers at the White House was so great that some good people thought the worry and turmoil enough to account for President Harrison's death. However that may be, the true cause was pneumonia. He died on the 4th of April, just one month after his inauguration, without having had time to indicate his policy. Among the Northern Whigs, however, there was little doubt as to what that policy ought to be. Mr. Clay was their real leader, and they regarded General Harrison as a mere figurehead candidate, selected for what is called, in political slang, availability. Doubtless most people at the North who voted for Harrison did so in the belief that his election meant the victory of Clay's theory of government in the reëstablishment of the national bank and the increase of tariff duties. Mr. Clay's own course, immediately after the inauguration, showed so plainly that he regarded the election as his own victory, that General Harrison felt called upon to administer a rebuke. "You seem to forget, sir," said he, "that it is I who am President." Harrison offered Clay the Secretaryship of State, and when Clay refused it because he preferred to stay in the Senate, it was given to Daniel Webster.

But whatever President Harrison's policy might have been, there could be no doubt that his sudden death, in raising Mr. Tyler to the presidency, created an unlooked-for situation, which was likely to rob Mr. Clay and his friends of the fruits of their victory. It has been the habit of Whig writers to speak of Mr. Tyler as a renegade, and to slur over the circumstances of his candidacy by declaring that at the time of his nomination his views on public questions, and in particular on the bank, were little known. But the

sketch of his career here given is enough to show that there was no man in the United States in 1840 whose opinions had been more clearly or more boldly declared; and if the Whigs had sinned in nominating him, they certainly had sinned with their eyes open. In the ill-yoked alliance of which the Whig party was born, the elements of a fierce quarrel were scarcely concealed, and the removal of President Harrison was all that was needed to kindle the flames of strife. "Tyler dares not resist," said Clay; "I'll drive him before me." On the other hand, the new President declared, "I pray you to believe that my back is to the wall, and that, while I shall deplore the assaults, I shall, if practicable, beat back the assailants;" and he was as good as his word. Congress met in extra session, May 31, 1841, the Senate standing 28 Whigs to 22 Democrats, the House 133 Whigs to 108 Democrats. In his opening message President Tyler briefly recounted the recent history of the United States Bank, the subtreasury system, and other financial schemes, and ended with the significant words, "I shall be ready to concur with you in the adoption of such system as you may propose, reserving to myself the ultimate power of rejecting any measure which may, in my view of it, conflict with the Constitution, or otherwise jeopard the prosperity of the country; a power which I could not part with, even if I would, but which I will not believe any act of yours will call into requisition." The challenge was promptly accepted by Congress. The ground was cleared for action by a bill for abolishing Van Buren's subtreasury system, which passed both houses and was signed by the President. But an amendment offered by Mr. Clay for the repeal of


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the law of 1836 regulating the deposits in the state banks was defeated by the votes of a small party, led by William C. Rives. The great question then came up. On constitutional grounds, Mr. Tyler's objection to the United States Bank had always been that Congress had no power to create such a corporation within the limits of a state without the consent of the state, ascertained beforehand. He did not deny, however, the power of Congress to establish a district bank for the District of Columbia, and, provided the several states should consent, there seemed to be no reason why this district bank should not set up its branch offices all over the country. Mr. Clay's so-called "fiscal bank" bill of 1841 did not make proper provision for securing the assent of the states, and on that ground Mr. Rives proposed an amendment, substituting a clause of a bill suggested by Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury, to the effect that such assent should be formally secured. Mr. Rives's amendment was supported not only by several so-called "State Rights Whigs," but also by Senators Richard H. Bayard and Rufus Choate, and other friends of Mr. Webster. If adopted, its effect would have been conciliatory, and it might perhaps have averted for a moment the rupture between the ill-yoked allies. The Democrats, well aware of this, voted against the amendment, and it was lost. The bill incorporating the Fiscal Bank of the United States was then passed by both houses, and on the 16th of August was vetoed by the President. An attempt to pass the bill over the veto failed of the requisite two-thirds majority.

The Whig leaders had already shown a disposition to entrap the President. Before the passage of

Mr. Clay's bill, John Minor Botts was sent to the White House with a private suggestion for a compromise. Mr. Tyler refused to listen to the suggestion except with the understanding that, should it meet with his disapproval, he should not hear from it again. The suggestion turned out to be a proposal that Congress should authorize the establishment of branches of the district bank in any state of which the legislature at its very next session should not expressly refuse its consent to any such proceeding; and that, moreover, in case the interests of the public should seem to require it, even such express refusal might be disregarded and overridden. By this means the obnoxious institution might first be established in the Whig states, and then forced upon the Democratic states in spite of themselves. The President indignantly rejected the suggestion as "a contemptible subterfuge, behind which he would not skulk." The device nevertheless became incorporated in Mr. Clay's bill, and an impression got abroad that it was put there in order to smooth the way for the President to adopt the measure, but that in his unreasonable obstinacy he refused to avail himself of the opportunity. After his veto of August 16 these tortuous methods were renewed. Messengers went to and fro between the President and members of his cabinet on the one hand and leading Whig members of Congress on the other, conditional assurances were translated into the indicative mood, whispered messages were magnified and distorted, and presently appeared upon the scene an outline of a bill that it was assumed the President would sign. This new measure was known as the "fiscal corporation" bill. Like the fiscal bank bill, it


created a bank in the District of Columbia, with branches throughout the states, and it made no proper provision for the consent of the states. The President had admitted that a "fiscal agency" of the United States government, established in Washington for the purpose of collecting, keeping, and disbursing the public revenue, was desirable if not indispensable; a regular bank of discount, engaged in commercial transactions throughout the states, and having the United States government as its principal shareholder and federal officers exerting a controlling influence upon its directorship, was an entirely different affair, something in his opinion neither desirable nor permissible. In the "fiscal corporation" bill an attempt was made to hoodwink the President and the public by a pretence of forbidding discounts and loans, and limiting the operations of the fiscal agency exclusively to exchanges. While this project was maturing, the Whig newspapers fulminated with threats against the President in case he should persist in his course; private letters warned him of plots to assassinate him; and Mr. Clay in the Senate referred to his resignation in 1836, and asked why, if constitutional scruples again hindered him from obeying the will of the people, did he not now resign his lofty position and leave it for those who could be more compliant? To this it was aptly replied by Mr. Rives that "the President was an independent branch of the government as well as Congress, and was not called upon to resign because he differed in opinion with them." Some of the Whigs seem really to have hoped that such a storm could be raised as would browbeat the President into resigning, whereby the government would be temporarily left in the hands of



William L. Southard, then president *pro tempore* of the Senate. But Mr. Tyler was neither to be hoodwinked nor bullied. The "fiscal corporation" bill was passed by the Senate on Saturday, September 4, 1841; on Thursday, the 9th, the President's veto message was received; on Saturday, the 11th, Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury, John Bell, Secretary of War, George E. Badger, Secretary of the Navy, John J. Crittenden, Attorney-general, and Francis Granger, Postmaster-general, resigned their places. The adjournment of Congress had been fixed for Monday, the 13th, and it was hoped that, suddenly confronted by a unanimous resignation of the cabinet and confused by want of time in which to appoint a new cabinet, the President would give up the game. But the resignation was not unanimous, for Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, remained at his post; and on Monday morning the President offered to the Senate for confirmation the names of Walter Forward of Pennsylvania for Secretary of the Treasury; John McLean of Ohio for Secretary of War, Abel P. Upshur of Virginia for Secretary of the Navy, Hugh S. Legaré of South Carolina for Attorney-general, and Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky for Postmaster-general. These excellent appointments were duly confirmed.

Whether the defection of Mr. Webster at this moment would have been so fatal to the President as some of the Whigs were inclined to believe may well be doubted; but there can be no doubt that his adherence to the President was of great value. By remaining in the cabinet Mr. Webster showed himself too clear-sighted to contribute to a victory of which the whole profit would be reaped by his rival, Mr. Clay;

and the President was glad to retain his hold upon so strong an element in the North as that which Mr. Webster represented. Some of the leading Whig members of Congress now issued addresses to the people, in which they loudly condemned the conduct of the President and declared that "all political connection between them and John Tyler was at an end from that day forth." It was open war between the two departments of government. Only a few members of Congress, commonly known as "the corporal's guard," really recognized Mr. Tyler as their leader; but the Democratic members came to his support as an ally against the Whigs. The state elections of 1841 showed some symptoms of a reaction in favour of the President's views, for in general the Whigs lost ground in them. As the spectre of the crisis of 1837 faded away in the distance, the people began to recover from the sudden and overmastering impulse that had swept the country in 1840, and the popular enthusiasm for the bank soon died away. Mr. Tyler had really won a victory of the first magnitude, as was conclusively shown in 1844, when the presidential platform of the Whigs was careful to make no allusion whatever to the bank. On this crucial question the doctrines of paternal government had received a crushing and permanent defeat. In the next session of Congress the strife with the President was renewed, but it was now tariff, not bank, that furnished the subject of discussion. The lowering of duties by the compromise tariff of 1833 had now diminished the revenue until it was insufficient to meet the expenses of government. The Whigs accordingly carried through Congress a bill continuing the protective duties of 1833, and pro-





viding that the surplus revenue, which was thus sure soon to accumulate, should be distributed among the states. But the compromise act of 1833, in which Mr. Tyler had played an important part, had provided that the protective policy should come to an end in 1842. Both on this ground, and because of the provisions for distributing the surplus, the President vetoed the new bill. Congress then devised and passed another bill, providing for a tariff "for revenue, with incidental protection," but still contemplating a distribution of the surplus if there should be any. The President vetoed this bill. Congress received the veto message with indignation, and on the motion of John Quincy Adams it was referred to a committee, which condemned it as an unwarrantable assumption of power, and after a caustic summary of Mr. Tyler's acts since his accession to office, concluded with a reference to impeachment. This report called forth from the President a formal protest; but the victory was already his. The Whigs were afraid to go before the country in the autumn elections with the tariff question unsettled, and the bill was accordingly passed by both houses without the distributing clause, and was at once signed by the President. As a parting menace, the distributing clause was then passed in a separate bill, but a "pocket veto" sufficed to dispose of it. Congress adjourned August 31, 1842, and in the autumn elections the Whig majority of 25 in the House of Representatives gave place to a Democratic majority of 61.

Here our story must for the present stop, with the total overthrow of the Whig doctrines of paternal government. As the net result of twenty years of political experience, since the election of John Quincy

Adams had raised new political issues, we find the Whig theory everywhere discomfited. The bank was too completely dead to find any mourners. The protective tariff was reduced to such a point that we were abreast with England in the march toward free trade, and our foreign commerce was beginning to rival that of England, when the Civil War and its war taxes set us back for a while. At the same time the policy of internal improvements remained, as it still remains, on the defensive. Viewed in its large relations, it was a noble victory for the sound Democratic doctrine of "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." The four eminent men who represented this doctrine were Jackson, Van Buren, Benton, and Blair. They also stood for the Union, against all separatist schemes, as strongly and devotedly as Webster and Clay. As for Tyler, while we cannot call him a great man, while for breadth of view and sound grasp of fundamental principles he is immeasurably below Van Buren, at the same time he is not so trivial a personage as his detractors would have us believe. He was honest and courageous, and in the defeat of Mr. Clay's theory of government he played an important and useful part. If he is small as compared with Jackson and Van Buren, he is great as compared with Pierce and Buchanan.

We cannot here consider the close of Mr. Tyler's presidency, because that would introduce a new set of considerations, and our time is now at an end. When the question of the annexation of Texas came into the foreground, the lines were speedily drawn between North and South, as they had not been drawn since 1820. Mr. Tyler and his State Rights Whigs had

already broken with the Northern Whigs. Now on the Texas question they allied themselves with the Democrats, thus following Calhoun, who had already, in 1838, after Jackson was out of the way, thought it safest to ally himself with that party. It was natural that all those who wished to defer the solution of the slavery question should sooner or later come to join the party that construed the Constitution as it had been construed by the elder Tyler and the elder Harrison in the convention of 1788. It was this that took the Tyler men over to the Democrats in 1844. In thus going over, they altered for the worse the character of the Democratic party. In 1844 Mr. Van Buren would naturally have been the Democratic candidate for the presidency, but because he bravely opposed the annexation of Texas as a reënforcement to the slave power, he was unable to secure the nomination. This was because Mr. Tyler's State Rights Whigs had joined the Democrats. As Lord Dundreary would say, the tail had now become able to wag the dog. From 1844 the Democratic party, led by Mr. Polk, the first "dark horse," came to be more and more a Southern party. The Northern Whigs, having seen all their economic principles defeated by Mr. Tyler, soon came to have nothing in common save the disposition to save the Union by concessions to the South; and on this plan of campaign they met with their final defeat in 1852. At the same time the Democrats became more and more dependent upon Southern support as they lost their Northern leaders. In 1848 we see Mr. Van Buren a candidate for the presidency upon a free-soil platform. By 1856 we see Benton dubious and Blair a Republican. Between 1850 and 1860

many of the best and most vigorous elements in the old Democratic party of Jackson and Van Buren had gone over to the new Republican party; just as since 1876 we have seen many of the most characteristic elements of the old Republican party of Lincoln and Sumner going over to the Democrats. Whatever may be the merits of the Republican party of to-day, it is no more the party of Lincoln and Sumner than the Federalist party of 1812 was the party of Hamilton and John Adams. Just so with the Democratic party forty years ago. By the subtraction of its original leaders, the Democratic party of Pierce and Buchanan came to be something quite different from the Democratic party of Jackson and Van Buren. It came to be a mere servant of the slave power. The danger which menaces the Republican party to-day is the danger that it may fall under the control of monopolists. Should it turn out to be so, the history of American politics points to the probable result. That history shows with clearness how moderately the evolution of society goes on where the popular will finds unhampered expression. When political parties go in quest of strange gods we cast them forth into outer darkness, and go on our way rejoicing. It is well that this is so, for so long as this can be done, we may be sure that we are a free people.



**IX**

**DANIEL WEBSTER  
AND THE SENTIMENT OF UNION**



## IX

### DANIEL WEBSTER

#### AND THE SENTIMENT OF UNION

WHEN the little town of Hampton, on the coast between the Merrimac and Piscataqua rivers, was settled in 1639 by Antinomians who had found cold welcome at Boston, among the company was one Thomas Webster, concerning whom little is known. A hundred years later we find his family living a few miles inland, at Kingston, and there Ebenezer Webster was born in 1739. Late in the Seven Years' War, Ebenezer Webster enlisted in the partisan troop celebrated as Rogers's "Rangers," and after some hard service and wild adventure returned home at the peace of 1763 with the rank of captain. He was soon after married, and with a company of friends and neighbours went to found the town of Salisbury, deep in the wilderness by the upper waters of the Merrimac and in the shadow of Kearsarge Mountain. Captain Webster's log house was built on a hill at the northern end of the township, and between that hill and Montreal, two hundred miles distant, there was nothing but the unbroken pine forest, with its prowling Indians and wolves. In 1775 the neighbourhood had become more populous, so that when the stout captain went to join the Continental army he took with him two hundred men. He served in almost every campaign of the Revolutionary War, and rose to the rank of colonel. At Bennington



he was one of the foremost in storming the German intrenchments; at West Point, on the night of the dreadful day which saw Benedict Arnold's flight to the *Vulture*, when doubt and misgiving were everywhere, he was placed in command of the guard at headquarters, and Washington said to him, "Colonel Webster, I believe I can trust *you*." In 1783 this veteran of two wars became owner of the Elms Farm in Salisbury, and lived there until his death, in 1806. He served as representative and senator in the New Hampshire legislature, and as judge in the Court of Common Pleas. In 1788 he was member of the state convention which ratified the federal Constitution. At the first meeting of that convention, which adjourned without a vote, he was bound, like the majority of the delegates, by instructions from his townsmen, to oppose the adoption of the Constitution. Before the second meeting he sought and obtained permission to act according to his own judgment; and when the vote was about to be taken he made the following brief but conclusive speech: "Mr. President, I have listened to the arguments for and against the Constitution. I am convinced such a government as that Constitution will establish, if adopted—a government acting directly on the people of the states—is necessary for the common defence and the common welfare. It is the only government which will enable us to pay off the national debt—the debt which we owe for the Revolution, and which we are bound in honour fully and fairly to discharge. Besides, I have followed the lead of Washington through seven years of war, and I have never been misled. His name is subscribed to this Constitution. He

will not mislead us now. I shall vote for its adoption" (Curtis, I. 10).

Colonel Webster was noted for manly beauty and noble bearing, for tireless industry, broad intelligence, and tenacious memory, and for most devoted and self-sacrificing love for his children. Of these there were five by the first wife, who died in 1774; and five by the second wife, Abigail Eastman, a lady of rare intelligence and strength of character. The youngest son, Daniel, was born on the 18th of January, 1782, so puny and sickly a babe that it was thought he could not live to grow up. As a lad he was considered too delicate for hard work on the farm, and was accordingly allowed a great deal of time for play. Much of this leisure he spent in fishing and hunting, or in roaming about the woods, the rest in reading. He never could remember when he learned to read. His thirst for knowledge was insatiable; he read every book that came within reach, and conned his favourite authors till he knew them by heart. In May, 1796, he was sent to Exeter Academy, where he made rapid progress with his studies, but was so overcome by shyness that he found it impossible to stand up and "speak pieces" before his schoolmates. When he saw so many eyes turned toward him, the words would not come, the master's encouraging remarks only added to his confusion, and he would go away and cry from vexation. But despite this timidity, his natural gifts as an orator had already begun to show themselves. His great, dark, lustrous eyes and rich voice, with its musical inflections, were already exerting fascination upon all who came within their range. Passing teamsters would stop their horses, farmers at work in

the field would pause, sickle in hand, to hear him recite verses from the Bible, Dr. Watts's hymns, or passages from Addison or Pope. Although Ebenezer Webster found it difficult, by unremitting labour and strictest economy, to support his numerous family, he saw such signs of promise in Daniel as to convince him that it was worth while, at whatever cost, to send him to college. Accordingly, in February, 1797, he took him from school, in order to hasten his preparatory studies by the aid of a private tutor, the Rev. Samuel Wood of Boscawen. It was on the sleigh-ride to that town, as they were toiling up a mountainous road through drifted snow, that Colonel Webster informed Daniel of his plans. The sensitive, warm-hearted boy, who had hardly dared hope for such good fortune and keenly felt the sacrifice it involved, laid his head upon his father's shoulder and burst into tears. After six months with his tutor, he had learned enough to fulfil the slender requirements of those days for admission to Dartmouth College, where he was duly graduated in 1801. He did not take rank at the head of his class, but it was observed that he was capable of great industry, that he seized an idea with surprising quickness, that his memory was prodigious, and his power of lucid statement unrivalled. Along with these enviable gifts he possessed that supreme poetic quality that defies analysis but is at once recognized as genius. He was naturally, therefore, considered by tutors and fellow-students the most remarkable man in the college, and the position of superiority thus early gained was easily maintained through life and wherever he was placed. While at college he conquered or outgrew his boyish shyness, so as to take

pleasure in public speaking, and his eloquence soon attracted so much notice that in 1800 the townspeople of Hanover selected this undergraduate to deliver the Fourth of July oration. There he began to preach that love for the Constitution and the Union which was to form his chief theme throughout life. After leaving college he went into a lawyer's office in Salisbury, and began studying law; but he had made up his mind to help his elder brother Ezekiel, of whom he was devotedly fond, to go through college, and this made it necessary for him to earn money by teaching in a country school. In July, 1804, he came to Boston in search of employment in some office where he might complete his studies. He was so fortunate as to find favour in the eyes of Christopher Gore, just returned from his mission to England. In Mr. Gore's office, as student and clerk, he could see some of the most eminent men in New England. In 1805 he went to Boscawen, and in two years' time had acquired a good country practice, which he turned over to his brother Ezekiel. He now removed to Portsmouth, where his reputation grew rapidly, so that he was soon considered a worthy antagonist to Jeremiah Mason, one of the greatest lawyers this country has ever produced. In June, 1808, he married Miss Grace Fletcher, of Hopkinton, New Hampshire.

His first important political pamphlet, published that year, was a criticism on the embargo.<sup>1</sup> In 1812,

<sup>1</sup> In connection with the Embargo that aroused such wide controversy in New England, a correspondent called Dr. Fiske's attention to a jingle that was passed from one to another of the wits of that generation, and was attributed by some to Lucius Manlius Sargent. It ran as follows: —

“Take nothing from nothing and nothing remains;  
Who votes for the Embargo is a fool for his pains.”

in a speech before the Washington Benevolent Society at Portsmouth, he summarized the objections of the New England people to the war just declared against Great Britain. He was immediately afterward chosen delegate to a convention of the people of Rockingham County, and drew up the so-called "Rockingham Memorial," addressed to President Madison, which contained a formal protest against the war. In the following autumn he was elected to Congress, and on taking his seat, in May, 1813, he was placed on the Committee on Foreign Relations. His first step in Congress was the introduction of a series of resolutions aimed at the President, and calling for a statement of the time and manner in which Napoleon's pretended revocation of his decrees against American shipping had been announced to the United States. His first great speech, January 14, 1814, was in opposition to the bill for encouraging enlistments, and at the close of that year he opposed Secretary Monroe's measures for enforcing what was known as the "draft of 1814." But while Mr. Webster's attitude toward the administration was that of the Federalist party to which he belonged, he did not go so far as the leaders of that party in New England. He condemned the embargo as more harmful to ourselves than to the enemy, as there is no doubt it was; he disapproved the policy of invading Canada, and maintained that our wisest course was to increase the strength of the navy; and on these points history will probably judge him to have been correct. But in his opinion that the war itself was unnecessary and injurious to the country, he was probably, like most New Englanders of that time, mistaken. Could he have foreseen and taken into the

account the rapid and powerful development of national feeling in the United States which the war called forth, it would have modified his view; for it is clear that the war party, represented by Henry Clay and his friends, was at that moment the truly national party, and Mr. Webster's sympathies were then, as always, in favour of the broadest nationalism, and entirely opposed to every sort of sectional or particularist policy. This broad national spirit, which was strong enough in the two Adamses to sever their connection with the Federalists of New England, led Mr. Webster to use his influence successfully to keep New Hampshire out of the Hartford convention. In the 13th Congress, however, we find him voting 191 times on the same side with Timothy Pickering, and only 4 times on the opposite side. Other questions were discussed besides those relating to the war. In this and the next Congress the most important work done by Mr. Webster was concerned with the questions of currency and a national bank. He did good service in killing the pernicious scheme for a bank endowed with the power of issuing irredeemable notes and obliged to lend money to the government. He was even disposed to condemn outright the policy of allowing the government to take any part whatever in the management of the bank. He also opposed a protective tariff, but by supporting Mr. Calhoun's bill for internal improvements he put himself on record as a loose constructionist. In the light of subsequent events it seems odd to find Mr. Calhoun defending the policy of internal improvements on the ground of its tendency to consolidate the Union, and it seems odd to find Mr. Webster in cordial alliance with the great South

man upon this or any other question. But it is to be borne in mind that, owing to the concessions made to slavery in the federal Constitution, South Carolina was at first strongly Federalist in her politics, and but for her attitude in this regard it is not at all likely that the Constitution would ever have been ratified. It was the prompt action of South Carolina in 1788 that killed the promising scheme of the Anti-federalists of Virginia, headed by Patrick Henry, for a separate Southern confederacy. It was not until after 1820 that South Carolina started upon the opposite course, which in less than ten years was to carry her to the verge of secession. It was the strength of the Northern opposition to the admission of Missouri as a slave state that first alarmed South Carolina; and her political alliance with New England was broken when the latter section of the country began to declare itself in favour of high tariffs. But in 1816 it was quite natural that, on a question concerning the general powers of the federal government, Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Webster should be found on the same side. In the course of this session of Congress the cantankerous Randolph saw fit to defy Mr. Webster to mortal combat for words spoken in debate; but the challenge was declined with grim humour. Mr. Webster said that he did not feel called upon to expose his life at the request of any other man who might be willing to risk his own; but he should always "be prepared to repel in a suitable manner the aggression of any man" who should venture to "presume upon such a refusal." Mr. Randolph had thus no alternative but to ignore this very significant hint, and gracefully declare his nice sense of honour quite satisfied.

At the expiration of his second term in Congress, Mr. Webster retired for a while to private life. He was in great need of money, and, moving from Portsmouth to Boston about this time, he soon found himself earning in his profession not less than \$20,000 a year. One of the first cases upon which he was now engaged was the famous Dartmouth College affair. While Mr. Webster's management of this case went far toward placing him at the head of the American bar, the political significance of its decision was such as to make it an important event in the history of the United States. It shows Mr. Webster not only as a great constitutional lawyer and consummate advocate, but also as a powerful champion of federalism. In its origin Dartmouth College was a missionary school for Indians, founded in 1754 by the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock, at Lebanon, Connecticut. After a few years, funds were raised by private subscription for the purpose of enlarging the school into a college, and as the Earl of Dartmouth had been one of the chief contributors, Dr. Wheelock appointed him and other persons trustees of the property. The site of the college was fixed in New Hampshire, and a royal charter in 1769 created it a perpetual corporation. The charter recognized Wheelock as founder, and appointed him president, with power to name his successor, subject to confirmation by the trustees. Dr. Wheelock devised the presidency to his son John Wheelock, who accordingly became his successor. The charter, in expressly forbidding the exclusion of any person on account of his religious belief, reflected the broad and tolerant disposition of Dr. Wheelock, who was a liberal Presbyterian, and as such had been



engaged in prolonged controversy with that famous representative of the strictest Congregationalism, Dr. Joseph Bellamy. In 1793, Bellamy's pupil, Nathaniel Niles, became a trustee of Dartmouth, and between him and John Wheelock the old controversy was revived and kept up with increasing bitterness for several years, dividing the board of trustees into two hostile parties. At length, in 1809, the party opposed to President Wheelock gained a majority in the board, and thus became enabled in various ways to balk and harass the president, until in 1815 the quarrel broke forth into a war of pamphlets and editorial articles that convulsed the whole state of New Hampshire. The Congregational Church was at that time the established church in New Hampshire, supported by taxation, and the Federalist party found its strongest adherents among the members of that church. Naturally, therefore, the members of other churches, and persons opposed on general principles to the establishment of a state church, were inclined to take sides with the Republicans. In 1815 President Wheelock petitioned the legislature for a committee to investigate the conduct of the trustees, whom he accused of various offences, from intolerance in matters of religion to improper management of the funds. Thus the affair soon became a party question, in which the Federalists upheld the trustees, while the Republicans sympathized with the president. The legislature granted the petition for a committee, but the trustees forthwith, in a somewhat too rash spirit of defiance, deposed Mr. Wheelock and chose a new president, the Rev. Francis Brown. In the ensuing state election Mr. Wheelock and his sympathizers

went over to the Republicans, who thus succeeded in electing their candidate for governor, with a majority of the legislature. In June, 1816, the new legislature passed an act reorganizing the college, and a new board of trustees was at once appointed by the governor. Judge Woodward, secretary of the old board, went over to the new board and became its secretary, taking with him the college seal. The new board proceeded to expel the old board, which forthwith brought suit against Judge Woodward in an action of trover for the college seal. The case was tried in May, 1817, with those two great lawyers, Jeremiah Mason and Jeremiah Smith, as counsel for the plaintiffs. It was then postponed till September, when Mr. Webster was secured by the plaintiffs as an additional counsel. The plaintiffs contended that in the case of a corporation chartered for private uses, any alleged misconduct of the trustees was properly a question for the courts, and not for the legislature, which in meddling with such a question plainly transcended its powers. Their chief reliance was upon this point, but they contended that the act of legislature reorganizing the college was an act impairing the obligation of a contract, and therefore violated the Constitution of the United States. Nothing is more interesting or more significant in the history of the case than the fact that neither of the three great lawyers who represented the plaintiffs at first attached much importance to this second point, which to-day seems so obvious that we only wonder how any one could ever for a moment have hesitated about urging it. One could hardly find anywhere a more forcible illustration of the change which seventy years have wrought in our

conception of the sphere and duties of the federal government; and one of the most potent factors in that change was the decision of the Supreme Court in this very case of Dartmouth College. The state court at Exeter decided against the plaintiffs, and the decision would have been final had it not been for the point which at first they had approached so gingerly, but which now enabled them to carry up their case to the Supreme Court of the United States.

It now remained to be seen whether the federal tribunal would admit the position of the plaintiffs, or dismiss the case for want of jurisdiction. As the elder counsel were unable to go to Washington, it fell to Mr. Webster to conduct the case, which was tried in March, 1818. He argued that the charter of Dartmouth College created a private corporation for administering a charity; that in the administration of such uses the trustees have a recognized right of property; that the grant of such a charter is a contract between the sovereign power and the grantees, and descends to their successors, and that therefore the act of the New Hampshire legislature, in taking away the government from one board of trustees and conferring it upon another, was a violation of contract, and as such an infringement of the federal Constitution. These legal points were argued by Mr. Webster with masterful cogency, and reënforced by illustrations and allusions well calculated to appeal to the Federalist sympathies of Chief Justice Marshall. For, besides the legal interpretation, there was an important political side to the question which recommended it to the earnest consideration of the great judge, who, in building up a new system of federal

jurisprudence in accordance with the spirit of English precedents, was often to some extent obliged to make law as well as declare it. Should the legislative action of a state upon its own citizens be final, so that there should be no secure shelter for vested rights against the unchecked caprice of a mere majority swayed by some momentary impulse; or was the authority of the federal government competent to insure that the state, in dealing with individuals or with private corporations, should recognize certain fundamental principles of law as sacred and unassailable? The latter alternative was, of course, the one for which our federal Constitution was designed to provide, but incalculable consequences depended upon the extent of jurisdiction which, in accordance with that instrument, might be claimed by the federal courts. Here was a question that touched the master chord in the natures alike of the mighty advocate and of the mighty judge, and as the one spoke and the other listened, it must have been, indeed, a memorable scene. Mr. Webster possessed in the highest degree the art of so presenting a case that the mere statement seemed equivalent to demonstration; and never perhaps did he exhibit that art in greater perfection or use it to better purpose than in this argument, in which the political aspect of the case was plainly seen and felt, but never allowed to intrude upon the foreground, where the purely legal considerations were mustered. The concluding sentences have often been remarked as bold and consummate in their art, in suddenly abandoning argument and appealing to emotion. But the art in it was doubtless that best kind of art that nature makes. Mr. Webster was a man of intense

feelings. He was not merely defending a great principle of constitutional government, but he was pleading the cause of the little college where, by dint of hard work and many sacrifices, his brother Ezekiel and himself had obtained their education. Instead of describing in general terms what would happen if American colleges were liable to be drawn into the political arena and their government made the sport of contending parties, he closed his speech with these few simple words: "This, sir, is my case. It is the case not merely of that humble institution, it is the case of every college in our land. . . . Sir, you may destroy this little institution; it is weak, it is in your hands! I know it is one of the lesser lights in the literary horizon of our country. You may put it out. But if you do so, you must carry through your work! You must extinguish one after another those greater lights of science which for more than a century have thrown their radiance over our land. It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet, there are those who love it." Here Mr. Webster's voice trembled and his eyes were wet with tears. Coming from this grand and stately man, who for five hours had held judges and audience spellbound by power of reasoning and beauty of phrase, the effect of this natural burst of feeling was extraordinary. Leaning forward in breathless silence, with eyes suffused and with beating hearts, judges and audience forgot all else in eager watching of every movement of the speaker's face, when recovering himself he said in his most solemn tones, addressing the chief justice: "Sir, I know not how others may feel [glancing at the opponents of the college before him], but for myself, when I see my Alma Mater sur-

rounded, like Cæsar in the senate-house, by those who are reiterating stab after stab, I would not for this right hand have her turn to me and say, *Et tu quoque, mi fili ! And thou too, my son !*" As he sat down, said a gentleman who was present, "there was a death-like stillness throughout the room for some moments ; every one seemed to be slowly recovering himself, and coming gradually back to his ordinary range of thought and feeling." The decision of the court, rendered in the following autumn, sustained Mr. Webster and set aside the act of the legislature as unconstitutional. It was one of those far-reaching decisions in which the Supreme Court, under Marshall, fixed the interpretation of the Constitution in such wise as to add greatly to its potency as a fundamental instrument of government. It was a case in which a contrary decision would have altered the whole future of American law, and would have modified our political and social development in many ways. The clause of our Constitution prohibiting state legislation in impairment of contracts, like most such general provisions, stood in need of judicial decisions to determine its scope. By bringing under the protection of this clause every charter granted by a state, the decision in the Dartmouth College case went farther perhaps than any other in our history toward limiting state sovereignty and extending the federal jurisdiction.

This extension of federal power was, moreover, entirely in the right direction. It was conservative, pacific, and just in its tendencies. It is no part of the legitimate business of government to help people in business, whether under pretence of fostering domestic industry, or what not ; but it is the legitimate business

of government to preserve order and punish criminals, to see that contracts are fulfilled, that charters are kept inviolate, and the foundations of human confidence not rudely or wantonly disturbed, for only thus does the community insure for its members a fair field and no favour.

In the Dartmouth College case we may see one chapter in Mr. Webster's great life-work of strengthening the federal government and tightening the bonds of pacific union among the states.

In the Massachusetts convention of 1820 for revising the state constitution, he next played an important part. He advocated with success the abolition of religious tests for office-holders, and in a speech in support of the feature of property representation in the senate he examined the theory and practice of bicameral legislation. His discussion of that subject is well worthy of study. In the same year, at the celebration of the second centennial of the landing of the Pilgrims, his commemorative oration was one of the noblest ever delivered. In 1825, on the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill monument, he attained still higher perfection of eloquence; and one year later, on the deaths of Adams and Jefferson, his eulogy upon those statesmen completed a trio of historical addresses unsurpassed in splendour. The spirit which animates these orations is that of the broadest patriotism, enlightened by a clear perception of the fundamental importance of the federal union between the states, and an ever present consciousness of the mighty future of our country and its moral significance in the history of the world. Such topics have often been treated as commonplaces, and made the theme of vapid rhetoric; but under Daniel

Webster's treatment they acquired a philosophical value, and were fraught with most serious and earnest meaning. These orations were conceived in a spirit of religious devotion to the Union, and contributed powerfully toward awakening such a sentiment in those who read them afterward, while upon those who heard them from the lips of the majestic speaker the impression was such as could never be effaced. The historian must assign to them a high place among the literary influences that aroused in the American people a sentiment of union strong enough to endure the shock of war.

In 1822 Mr. Webster was elected to Congress from the Boston district, and was twice reëlected by a popular vote that was almost unanimous. As chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the House, he prepared and carried the "crimes act," in which the criminal jurisprudence of the federal courts was thoroughly remodelled. The preparation of this bill showed in a high degree his constructive genius as a legislator, while in carrying it through Congress his parliamentary skill and persuasiveness in debate were equally conspicuous. Of his two most celebrated speeches in Congress during this period, the first related to the revolution in Greece. In January, 1824, Mr. Webster brought forward a resolution in favour of making provision for a commissioner to Greece, should President Monroe see fit to appoint one. In his speech on this occasion, he set forth the hostility of the American people to the principles, motives, and methods of the Holy Alliance, and their sympathy with such struggles for self-government as that in which the Greeks were engaged. The resolution was not adopted, but the



speech gave its author a European reputation. It was translated into almost all the languages of Europe, from Gibraltar to the Volga, and called forth much lively comment.

The other great speech, delivered in April, 1824, was what is commonly called Mr. Webster's "free trade speech." A bill had been introduced for revising the tariff in such a way as to extend the operation of the protective system. In this speech Mr. Webster found fault with the phrase "American policy," as applied by Mr. Clay to the system of high protective duties. "If names are thought necessary," said Mr. Webster, "it would be well enough, one would think, that the name should be in some measure descriptive of the thing; and since Mr. Speaker denominates the policy which he recommends a 'new policy in this country'; since he speaks of the present measure as a new era in our legislation; since he professes to invite us to depart from our accustomed course, to instruct ourselves by the wisdom of others, and to adopt the policy of the most distinguished foreign states, — one is a little curious to know with what propriety of speech this imitation of other nations is denominated an 'American policy,' while, on the contrary, a preference for our own established system, as it now actually exists and always has existed, is called a 'foreign policy.' This favourite American policy is what America has never tried; and this odious foreign policy is what, as we are told, foreign states have never pursued. Sir, that is the truest American policy which shall most usefully employ American capital and American labour." After this exordium, Mr. Webster went on to give a masterly exposition of some of

the elementary theorems of political economy, and a survey, at once comprehensive and accurate, of the condition of American industry at the time. He not only attacked Mr. Clay's policy on broad national grounds, but also showed more specifically that it was likely to prove injurious to the maritime commerce in which the New England states had so long taken the lead; and he concluded by characterizing that policy as "so burdensome and so dangerous to that interest which has steadily enriched, gallantly defended, and proudly distinguished us, that nothing can prevail upon me to give it my support." Upon this last clause of his speech he was afterward enabled to rest a partial justification of his change of attitude toward the tariff.

In politics Mr. Webster occupied at this time quite an independent position. The old Federalist party, to which he had formerly belonged, was completely broken down, and the new National Republican party, with its inheritance of many of the principles, motives, and methods of the federalists, was just beginning to take shape under the leadership of Adams and Clay. Between these eminent statesmen and Mr. Webster, the state of feeling was not such as to insure cordial coöperation; but in their views of government there was similarity enough to bring them together in opposition to the new Democratic party represented by Jackson, Benton, and Van Buren. With the extreme Southern views of Crawford and Calhoun it was impossible that he should sympathize, although his personal relations with those leaders were quite friendly, and after the death of Calhoun the noblest eulogium upon his character and motives was made by Mr. Webster. Coleridge once said that every man is born


either an Aristotelian or a Platonist. There is a sense in which all American statesmen may be said to be intellectually the descendants and disciples, either of Jefferson or of Hamilton, and as a representative follower of Hamilton, Mr. Webster was sure to be drawn rather toward Clay than toward Jackson. The course of industrial events in New England was such as to involve changes of opinion in that part of the country, which were soon reflected in a complete reversal of Mr. Webster's attitude toward the tariff. In 1827 he was elected to the United States Senate. In that year an agitation was begun by the woollen manufacturers, which soon developed into a promiscuous scramble among different industries for aid from government, and finally resulted in the tariff of 1828. That act, which was generally known at the time as "the tariff of abominations," was the first extreme application of the protective system in our federal legislation. When the bill was pending before the Senate in April, 1828, Mr. Webster made a memorable speech, in which he completely abandoned the position he had held in 1824, and from this time forth he was a supporter of the policy of Mr. Clay and the protectionists. For this change of attitude he was naturally praised by his new allies, who were glad to interpret it as a powerful argument in favour of their views. By every one else he was blamed, and this speech has often been cited, together with that of March 7, 1850, as proving that Mr. Webster was governed by unworthy motives and wanting in political principle. The two cases, as we shall see, are in many respects parallel. In neither case did Mr. Webster attempt to conceal or disguise his real motives. In 1828 he frankly admitted that the policy

of protection to manufacturers, by means of tariff duties, was a policy of which he had disapproved, whether as a political economist or as a representative of the interests of New England. Against his own opposition and that of New England the act of 1824 had passed. "What, then, was New England to do? . . . Was she to hold out forever against the course of the government, and see herself losing on one side and yet make no effort to sustain herself on the other? No, sir. Nothing was left for New England but to conform herself to the will of others. Nothing was left to her but to consider that the government had fixed and determined its own policy; and that policy was *protection*." In other words, the tariff policy adopted at Washington, while threatening the commercial interests of New England, had favoured the investment of capital in manufactures there, and it was not becoming in a representative of New England to take part in disturbing the new arrangement of things. This argument, if pushed far enough, would end in the doctrine — now apparently obsolete, though it has often been attacked and defended — that a senator is simply the ambassador of his state in Congress. With Mr. Webster it went so far as to modify essentially his expressions of opinion as to the constitutionality of protective legislation. He had formerly been inclined to interpret the Constitution strictly upon this point, but in 1828 and afterward his position was that of the loose constructionists. From the economic point of view he would doubtless have been a safer guide for New England had he insisted upon acting up to the full measure of his convictions. He was too honest a thinker to be able to conceal the real workings of his mind,

and his speeches in defence of the high tariff policy never once had the ring of true metal. Other men might be fooled by the sophistry of protectionism, but he was not. It would be unfair, however, to charge him with conscious dereliction to principle in this matter. It would be more just and more correct to say that, amid the complication of conflicting interests, he felt it necessary to subordinate one question to another that was at that time clearly more important. His conduct was far more the result of his strong Federalist bias than of the temperament which has sometimes been called "opportunism."

This tariff of 1828 soon furnished an occasion for the display of his strong Federalist spirit in a way that was most serviceable for his country and has earned for him undying fame as an orator and statesman. It led to the distinct announcement of the principles of nullification by the public men of South Carolina, with Mr. Calhoun at their head. During President Jackson's first term the question as to nullification seemed to occupy everybody's thoughts, and had a way of intruding upon the discussion of all other questions. In December, 1829, Samuel A. Foote of Connecticut presented to the Senate a resolution inquiring into the expediency of limiting the sales of the public lands to those already in the market, besides suspending the surveys of the public lands and abolishing the office of Surveyor-general. The resolution was quite naturally resented by the Western senators, as having a tendency to check the growth of their section of the country. The debate was opened by Mr. Benton, and lasted several weeks, with increasing bitterness. The belief in the hostility of the New England states toward

the West was shared by many Southern senators, who desired to unite South and West in opposition to the tariff. On the 19th of January, 1830, Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina attacked the New England states, accusing them of aiming by their protective policy at aggrandizing themselves at the expense of all the rest of the Union. On the next day Mr. Webster delivered his "first speech on Foote's resolution," in which he took up Mr. Hayne's accusations and answered them with great power. This retort provoked a long and able reply from Mr. Hayne, in which he not only assailed Mr. Webster and Massachusetts and New England, but set forth quite ingeniously and elaborately the doctrines of nullification. In view of the political agitation then going on in South Carolina, it was felt that this speech would work practical mischief unless it should meet with instant refutation. It was finished on the 25th of January, and on the next two days Mr. Webster delivered his "second speech on Foote's resolution," better known in history as the "Reply to Hayne." The debate had now lasted so long that people had come from different parts of the country to Washington to hear it, and on the 26th of January the crowd not only filled the galleries and invaded the floor of the senate-chamber, but occupied all the lobbies and entries within hearing and even beyond. In the first part of his speech Mr. Webster replied to the aspersions upon himself and New England; in the second part he attacked with weighty argument and keen-edged sarcasm the doctrine of nullification. He did not undertake to deny the right of revolution, as a last resort in cases with which legal and constitutional methods are found inadequate to



deal; but he assailed the theory of the Constitution maintained by Calhoun and his followers, according to which nullification was a right the exercise of which was compatible with loyal adherence to the Constitution. His course of argument was twofold: he sought to show, first, that the theory of the Constitution as a terminable league or compact between sovereign states was unsupported by the history of its origin, and secondly, that the attempt, on the part of any state, to act upon that theory must necessarily entail civil war or the disruption of the Union. As to the sufficiency of his historical argument, there has been much difference of opinion. The question is difficult to deal with in such a way as to reach an unassailable conclusion, and the difficulty is largely due to the fact that in the various ratifying conventions of 1787-1789 the men who advocated the adoption of the Constitution did not all hold the same opinions as to the significance of what they were doing. There was great divergence of opinion, and plenty of room for antagonisms of interpretation to grow up as irreconcilable as those of Webster and Calhoun. If the South Carolina doctrine distorted history in one direction, that of Mr. Webster certainly departed somewhat from the record in the other; but the latter was fully in harmony with the actual course of our national development and with the increased and increasing strength of the sentiment of union at the time when it was propounded with such powerful reasoning and such magnificent eloquence in the "Reply to Hayne." As an appeal to the common sense of the American people, nothing could be more masterly than Mr. Webster's demonstration that nullification practically meant revolution;

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and their unalterable opinion of the soundness of his argument was amply illustrated when at length the crisis came, which he deprecated with such intensity of emotion in his concluding sentences. To some of the senators who listened to the speech, as for instance Thomas H. Benton, it seemed as if the passionate eloquence of its close concerned itself with imaginary dangers never likely to be realized; but the event showed that Mr. Webster estimated correctly the perilousness of the doctrine against which he was contending. For genuine oratorical power, the "Reply to Hayne" is probably the greatest speech that has been delivered since the oration of Demosthenes on the crown. The comparison is natural, as there are points in the American orator that forcibly remind one of the Athenian. There is the fine sense of proportion and fitness, the massive weight of argument due to transparent clearness and matchless symmetry of statement, and along with the rest a truly Attic simplicity of diction. Mr. Webster never indulged in mere rhetorical flights; his sentences, simple in structure and weighted with meaning, went straight to the mark; and his arguments were so skilfully framed that, while his most learned and critical hearers were impressed with a sense of their conclusiveness, no man of ordinary intelligence could fail to understand them. To these high qualifications of the orator was added such a physical presence as but few men have been endowed with. I believe it was Carlyle who said of him, "I wonder if any man can possibly be as great as he looks!"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Webster's appearance was indeed

<sup>1</sup> In his paper on Andrew Jackson and American Democracy, page 270 of this volume, Dr. Fiske refers to the bright blue coat with brass buttons and buff waistcoat as worn by Daniel Webster, which came to be a symbol of Americanism. In



one of unequalled dignity and power, his voice was rich and musical, and the impressiveness of his delivery was enhanced by the depth of genuine manly feeling with which he spoke. Yet while his great speeches owed so much of their overpowering effect to the look and manner of the man, they were at the same time masterpieces of literature. Like the speeches of Demosthenes, they were capable of swaying the reader as well as the hearer, and their effects went far beyond the audience and far beyond the occasion of their delivery.

In all these respects the "Reply to Hayne" marks the culmination of Mr. Webster's power as an orator. Of all the occasions of his life, this encounter with the discussing "the provincialism of *ante bellum* days," the late Mr. Justin Winsor wrote Dr. Fiske, February 3, 1892, as follows: ". . . the blue coat and brass buttons, which so grandly set off the figure of Webster — I remember him in them often. He wore them when he made that speech at Marshfield, in which he showed his bitter disappointment that the Whigs had not nominated him rather than Taylor, and I was close to him during the whole of it. But I never supposed that it was solely because it gave brilliancy to a dignified carriage that he clung to that costume; but rather because it showed the Whig colours of blue and yellow, which Fox and his fellows had made common in precisely the same way in England during the early years of the century; and indeed I think George IV. when Regent wore it, when not in state. Certainly it was not an uncommon dress in Europe at a later period. When I was there in the early fifties, I had a dress coat of blue, with brass buttons, made in Paris, and I was not by any means singular in wearing it in company in Paris and Heidelberg."

A note on Dr. Boott, "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," 2d edition, page 294, throws further light on this point: "Francis Boott (born 1792, died 1863) . . . was . . . well known in connection with the Linnæan Society. . . . He is described (in a biographical sketch published in the *Gardener's Chronicle*, 1864) as having been one of the first physicians in London who gave up the customary black coat, knee breeches, and silk stockings, and adopted the ordinary dress of the period, a blue coat with brass buttons and a buff waistcoat, a costume which he continued to wear to the last."

Though the blue-tailed coat was indeed an ordinary gentleman's costume in England, it stood, as may be seen from coloured prints of the day, rather for quiet and dignity than for "smartness" and fashion. In the United States it certainly developed independently into what Daniel Webster made it — a symbol of Americanism.


doctrine of nullification on its first bold announcement in the Senate was certainly the greatest; and the speech was equal to the occasion. It struck a chord in the heart of the American people which had not ceased to vibrate when the crisis came thirty years later. It gave articulate expression to a sentiment of loyalty to the Union that went on growing until the American citizen was as prompt to fight for the Union as the Mussulman for his Prophet or the Cavalier for his king. It furnished, moreover, a clear and comprehensive statement of the theory by which that sentiment of loyalty was justified. Of the men who in after years gave up their lives for the Union, doubtless the greater number had as schoolboys declaimed passages from this immortal speech and caught some inspiration from its fervid patriotism. Probably no other speech ever made in Congress has found so many readers or exerted so much influence in giving shape to men's thoughts.

Three years afterward Mr. Webster returned to the struggle with nullification, being now pitted against the master of that doctrine instead of the disciple. In the interval South Carolina had attempted to put the doctrine into practice, and had been resolutely met by President Jackson with his proclamation of the 10th of December, 1832. In response to a special message from the President, early in January, 1833, the so-called "force bill," empowering the President to use the army and navy, if necessary, for enforcing the revenue laws in South Carolina, was reported in the Senate. The bill was opposed by Democrats who did not go so far as to approve of nullification, but the defection of these senators was

more than balanced by the accession of Mr. Webster, who upon this measure came promptly to the support of the administration. For this, says Benton, "his motives . . . were attacked, and he was accused of subserviency to the President for the sake of future favour. At the same time, all the support which he gave to these measures was the regular result of the principles which he laid down against nullification in the debate with Mr. Hayne, and he could not have done less without being derelict to his own principles then avowed. It was a proud era in his life, supporting with transcendent ability the cause of the Constitution and of the country, in the person of a chief magistrate to whom he was politically opposed, bursting the bonds of party at the call of duty, and displaying a patriotism worthy of admiration and imitation. General Jackson felt the debt of gratitude and admiration which he owed him; the country, without distinction of party, felt the same. . . . He was the colossal figure on the political stage during that eventful time; and his labours, splendid in their day, survive for the benefit of distant posterity" ("Thirty Years' View," I. 334). The support of the President's policy by Mr. Webster, and its enthusiastic approval by nearly all the Northern and a great many of the Southern people, seems to have alarmed Mr. Calhoun, probably not so much for his personal safety as for the welfare of his nullification schemes. The story that he was frightened by the rumour that Jackson had threatened to begin by arresting him on a charge of treason is now generally discredited. He had seen enough, however, to convince him that the theory of peaceful nullification was not now likely to be realized. It

was not his aim to provoke an armed collision, and accordingly a momentary alliance was made between himself and Mr. Clay, resulting in the compromise tariff bill of the 12th of February, 1833. Only four days elapsed between Mr. Webster's announcement of his intention to support the President and the introduction of this compromise measure. Mr. Webster at once opposed the compromise, both as unsound economically and as an unwise and dangerous concession to the threats of the nullifiers. At this point the force bill was brought forward, and Mr. Calhoun made his great speech, February 15 and 16, in support of the resolutions he had introduced on the 22d of January, affirming the doctrine of nullification. To this Mr. Webster replied, February 16, with his speech entitled "The Constitution not a Compact between Sovereign States," in which he supplemented and reënforced the argument of the "Reply to Hayne." Mr. Calhoun's answer, February 26, was perhaps the most powerful speech he ever delivered, and Mr. Webster did not reply to it at length. The burden of the discussion was, what the American people really did when they adopted the federal Constitution. Did they simply create a league between sovereign states, or did they create a national government, which operates immediately upon individuals, and, without superseding the state governments, stands superior to them and claims a prior allegiance from all citizens? It is now plain to be seen that in point of fact they did create such a national government; but how far they realized at the outset what they were doing is quite another question. Mr. Webster's main conclusion was sustained with colossal strength; but

his historical argument was in some places weak, and the weakness is unconsciously betrayed in a disposition toward wire-drawn subtlety, from which Mr. Webster was usually quite free. His ingenious reasoning upon the meaning of such words as "compact" and "accede" was easily demolished by Mr. Calhoun, who was, however, more successful in hitting upon his adversary's vulnerable points than in making good his own case. In fact, the historical question was not really so simple as it presented itself to the minds of those two great statesmen. But in whatever way it was to be settled, the force of Mr. Webster's practical conclusions remained, as he declared in the brief rejoinder with which he ended the discussion, — "Mr. President, turn this question over and present it as we will — argue it as we may — exhaust upon it all the fountains of metaphysics — stretch over it all the meshes of logical or political subtlety — it still comes to this, Shall we have a general government? Shall we continue the union of the states under a *government* instead of a league? This is the upshot of the whole matter; because, if we are to have a government, that government must act like other governments, by majorities; it must have this power, like other governments, of enforcing its own laws and its own decisions; clothed with authority by the people and always responsible to the people, it must be able to hold its course unchecked by external interposition. According to the gentleman's views of the matter, the Constitution is a *league*; according to mine, it is a regular popular *government*. This vital and all-important question the people will decide, and in deciding it they will determine whether, by ratifying the pres-




ent Constitution and Frame of Government, they meant to do nothing more than to amend the articles of the old confederation." As the immediate result of the debates, both the force bill and the compromise tariff bill were adopted, and this enabled Mr. Calhoun to maintain that the useful and conservative character of nullification had been demonstrated, since the action of South Carolina had, without leading to violence, led to such modifications of the tariff as she desired. But the abiding result was, that Mr. Webster had set forth the theory upon which the Union was to be preserved, and that the administration, in acting upon that theory, had established a precedent for the next administration that should be called upon to confront a similar crisis.

The alliance between Mr. Webster and President Jackson extended only to the question of maintaining the Union. As an advocate of the policy of a national bank, a protective tariff, and internal improvements, Mr. Webster's natural place was by the side of Mr. Clay in the Whig party, which was now in the process of formation. He was also at one with both the Northern and the Southern sections of the Whig party in opposition to what Mr. Benton called the "*demoskrateo*" principle, according to which the President, in order to carry out the "will of the people," might feel himself authorized to override the constitutional limitations upon his power. This was not precisely what Mr. Benton meant by his principle, but it was the way in which it was practically illustrated in Jackson's war against the bank. In the course of this struggle, Mr. Webster made more than sixty speeches, remarkable for their wide and accurate knowledge of

finance. His consummate mastery of statement is nowhere more thoroughly exemplified than in these speeches. Constitutional questions were brought up by Mr. Clay's resolutions censuring the President for the removal of the deposits and for dismissing William J. Duane, Secretary of the Treasury. In reply to the resolutions, President Jackson sent to the Senate his remarkable "Protest," in which he maintained that in the mere discussion of such resolutions that body transcended its constitutional prerogatives, and that the President is the "direct representative of the American people," charged with the duty, if need be, of protecting them against the usurpations of Congress. The Whigs maintained, with much truth, that this doctrine, if carried out in all its implications, would push democracy to the point where it merges in Cæsarism. It was now that the opposition began to call themselves Whigs, and tried unsuccessfully to stigmatize the President's supporters as "Tories." Mr. Webster's speech on the President's protest, May 7, 1834, was one of great importance, and should be read by every student of our constitutional history. In another elaborate speech, February 16, 1835, he tried to show that under a proper interpretation of the Constitution the power of removal, like the power of appointment, was vested in the President and Senate conjointly, and that "the decision of Congress in 1789, which separated the power of removal from the power of appointment, was founded on an erroneous construction of the Constitution." But subsequent opinion has upheld the decision of 1789, leaving the speech to serve as an illustration of the way in which, under the stress of a particular contest, the Whigs

were as ready to strain the Constitution in one direction as the Democrats were inclined to bend it in another. An instance of the latter kind was Mr. Benton's expunging resolution, against which Mr. Webster emphatically protested.


About this time Mr. Webster was entertaining thoughts of retiring, for a while at least, from public life. As he said in a letter to a friend, he had not for fourteen years had leisure to attend to his private affairs or to become acquainted by travel with his own country. This period had not, however, been entirely free from professional work. It was seldom that Mr. Webster took part in criminal trials, but in this department of legal practice he showed himself qualified to take rank with the greatest advocates that have ever addressed a jury. His speech for the prosecution, on the trial of the murderers of Captain Joseph White, at Salem, in August, 1830, has been pronounced equal to the finest speeches of Lord Erskine. In the autumn of 1824, while driving in a chaise with his wife from Sandwich to Boston, he stopped at the beautiful farm of Captain John Thomas, by the seashore at Marshfield. For the next seven years his family passed their summers at this place as guests of Captain Thomas; and as the latter was growing old and willing to be eased of the care of the farm, Mr. Webster bought it of him in the autumn of 1831. Captain Thomas continued to live there, until his death in 1837, as Mr. Webster's guest. For the latter it became the favourite home whither he retired in the intervals of public life. It was a place, he said, where he "could go out every day in the year and see something new." Mr. Webster was very fond of the sea.





He had also a passion for country life, for all the sights and sounds of the farm, for the raising of fine animals, as well as for hunting and fishing. The earlier years of Mr. Webster's residence at Marshfield, and of his service in the United States Senate, witnessed some serious events in his domestic life. Death removed his wife, January 21, 1828, and his brother Ezekiel, April 10, 1829. In December, 1829, he married Miss Caroline Le Roy, daughter of a wealthy merchant in New York. Immediately after this second marriage came the "Reply to Hayne." The beginning of a new era in his private life coincided with the beginning of a new era in his career as a statesman. After 1830 Mr. Webster was recognized as one of the greatest powers in the nation, and it seemed natural that the presidency should be offered to such a man. His talents, however, were not those of a party leader. He was always too independent. The earliest election at which he could have been a candidate for the presidency was that of 1832, and then there could be no doubt that Mr. Clay represented much more completely than Mr. Webster the doctrines of paternal government opposed by President Jackson. In the helter-skelter scramble of 1836 the legislature of Massachusetts nominated Mr. Webster, and he received the electoral vote of that state alone. The newly formed Whig party was inclined to withhold its true leaders and put forward a western soldier, General Harrison, in the hope of turning to their own uses the same kind of unreflecting popular enthusiasm which had carried General Jackson to the White House. In this policy, aided by the commercial distress which began in 1837, they succeeded in 1840.

Mr. Webster then accepted the office of Secretary of State in the Harrison-Tyler administration, and soon showed himself as able in diplomacy as in other departments of statesmanship. A complication of difficulties with Great Britain seemed to be bringing us to the verge of war. There was the long-standing dispute about the northeastern boundary, which had not been adequately defined by the treaty of 1783, and along with the renewal of this controversy there came up the cases of McLeod and the steamer *Caroline*, the slave-ship *Creole*, and all the manifold complications which these cases involved. The Oregon question, too, was looming in the background. In disentangling these difficulties, Mr. Webster showed rare tact and discretion. He was fortunately helped by the change of ministry in England, which transferred the management of foreign affairs from the hands of Lord Palmerston to those of Lord Aberdeen. Edward Everett was then in London, and Mr. Webster secured his appointment as minister to Great Britain. In response to this appointment, Lord Ashburton, whose friendly feeling toward the United States was known to every one, was sent over on a special mission to confer with Mr. Webster; and the result was the Ashburton treaty of 1842, by which an arbitrary and conventional line was adopted for the northeastern boundary, while the loss thereby suffered by the states of Maine and Massachusetts was to be indemnified by the United States. It was also agreed that Great Britain and the United States should each keep its own squadron to watch the coast of Africa for the suppression of the slave-trade, and that in this good work each nation should separately enforce its own



laws. This clause of the treaty was known as the "cruising convention." The old grievance of the impressment of seamen, which had been practically abolished by the glorious victories of American frigates in the War of 1812-1815, was now formally ended by Mr. Webster's declaration to Lord Ashburton that henceforth American vessels would not submit themselves to be searched. Henceforth the enforcement of the so-called "right of search" by a British ship would be regarded by the United States as a *casus belli*. When all the circumstances are considered, this Ashburton treaty shows that Mr. Webster's powers as a diplomatist were of a high order. In the hands of an ordinary statesman, the affair might easily have ended in a war; but his management was so dexterous that, as we now look back upon the negotiation, we find it hard to realize that there was any real danger. Perhaps there could be no more conclusive proof, or more satisfactory measure, of his success.


While these important negotiations were going on, great changes had come over the political horizon. There had been a quarrel between the Northern and Southern sections of the Whig party, and on the 11th of September, 1841, all the members of President Tyler's cabinet, except Mr. Webster, resigned. It seems to have been believed by many of the Whigs that a unanimous resignation on the part of the cabinet would force President Tyler to resign. The idea came from a misunderstanding of the British custom in similar cases, and it is an incident of great interest to the student of American history; but there was not the slightest chance that it should be realized.

Had there been any such chance, Mr. Webster defeated it by staying at his post in order to finish the treaty with Great Britain. The Whigs were inclined to attribute his conduct to unworthy motives, and no sooner had the treaty been signed, on August 9, 1842, than the newspapers began calling upon him to resign. The treaty was ratified in the Senate by a vote of thirty-nine to nine, but it had still to be adopted by Parliament, and much needless excitement was occasioned on both sides of the ocean by the discovery of an old map in Paris, sustaining the British view of the northeastern boundary, and another in London, sustaining the American view. Mr. Webster remained at his post in spite of popular clamour, until he knew the treaty to be quite safe. In the hope of driving him from the cabinet, the Whigs in Massachusetts held a convention and declared that President Tyler was no longer a member of their party. On a visit to Boston, Mr. Webster made a noble speech in Faneuil Hall, September 30, 1842, in the course of which he declared that he was neither to be coaxed nor driven into an action which in his own judgment was not conducive to the best interests of the country. He knew very well that by such independence he was likely to injure his chances for nomination to the presidency. He knew that a movement in favour of Mr. Clay had begun in Massachusetts, and that his own course was adding greatly to the impetus of that movement. But his patriotism rose superior to all personal considerations. In May, 1843, having seen the treaty firmly established, he resigned the secretaryship and returned to the practice of his profession in Boston. In the canvass of

1844 he supported Mr. Clay in a series of able speeches. On Mr. Choate's resignation, early in 1845, Mr. Webster was reëlected to the Senate. The two principal questions of Mr. Polk's administration related to the partition of Oregon and the difficulties which led to the war with Mexico. The Democrats declared that we must have the whole of Oregon up to the parallel of  $50^{\circ} 40'$ , although the 49th parallel had already been suggested as a compromise line. In a very able speech at Faneuil Hall, Mr. Webster advocated the adoption of this compromise. The speech was widely read in England and on the continent of Europe, and Mr. Webster followed it up with a private letter to Mr. Macgregor of Glasgow, expressing a wish that the British government might see fit to offer the 49th parallel as a boundary line. The letter was shown to Lord Aberdeen, who adopted the suggestion, and the dispute accordingly ended in the partition of Oregon between the United States and Great Britain.

During the operations on the Texas frontier, which brought on war with Mexico, Mr. Webster was absent from Washington. In the summer of 1847 he travelled through the Southern states, and was everywhere received with much enthusiasm. He opposed the prosecution of the war for the sake of acquiring more territory, because he foresaw that such a policy must speedily lead to a dangerous agitation of the slavery question. The war brought General Zachary Taylor into the foreground as a candidate for the presidency, and some of the Whig managers actually proposed to nominate Mr. Webster as Vice-president on the same ticket with General Taylor. He indignantly refused to accept such a proposal; but Mr. Clay's defeat in


1844 had made many Whigs afraid to take him again as a candidate, Mr. Webster was thought to be altogether too independent, and there was a feeling that General Taylor was the most available candidate and the only one who could supplant Mr. Clay. These circumstances led to Taylor's nomination, which Mr. Webster at first declined to support. He disapproved of soldiers as Presidents, and characterized the nomination as "one not fit to be made." At the same time he was far from ready to support Mr. Van Buren and the Free-soil party, yet in his situation some decided action was necessary. Accordingly, in his speech at Marshfield, September 1, 1848, he declared that, as the choice was really between General Taylor and General Cass, he should support the former. It has been contended that in this Mr. Webster made a great mistake, and that his true place in this canvass would have been with the Free-soil party. He had always been opposed to the further extension of slavery; but it is to be borne in mind that he looked with dread upon the rise of an antislavery party that should be supported only in the Northern states. Whatever tended to array the North and the South in opposition to each other, Mr. Webster wished especially to avoid. The ruling purpose of his life was to do what he could to prevent the outbreak of a conflict that might end in the disruption of the Union; and it may well have seemed that there was more safety in sustaining the Whig party in electing its candidate by the aid of Southern votes, than in helping into life a new party that should be purely sectional. At the same time, this cautious policy soon came to involve an amount of concession to Southern demands



far greater than the rapidly growing antislavery sentiment in the Northern states would readily tolerate. No doubt Mr. Webster's policy in 1848 pointed logically toward his last great speech, March 7, 1850, in which he supported Mr. Clay's elaborate compromises for disposing of the difficulties which had grown out of the vast extension of territory consequent upon the Mexican War. This speech aroused intense indignation at the North, and especially in Massachusetts. It was regarded by many people as a deliberate sacrifice of principle to policy. In order to secure the admission of California to the Union as a free state, it had been thought necessary to make some grave concessions to the Southerners, and among these concessions was the fugitive slave law, to which Mr. Webster, out of his overmastering desire to serve the Union and avoid Civil War, felt himself obliged to yield a reluctant consent. It was the saddest moment in his career, and covered him with obloquy such as has sufficed in many minds to dim and obscure his great fame. For ordinary men to succumb under the stress of Southern bluster and dictation might seem pardonable; but it was felt that Daniel Webster should have been capable of better things. The swelling tide of popular sentiment in Massachusetts found expression in the pathetic but terrible sermon of Theodore Parker, preached just after Webster's death. Let us listen, after these fifty years, to the words of the preacher. "Do men now mourn for him, the great man eloquent? I put on sackcloth long ago. I mourned when he spoke the speech of the Seventh of March. I mourned for him when the fugitive slave bill passed Congress, . . . when the kidnap-

pers first came to Boston, . . . when Ellen Craft fled to my house for shelter and for succour, and for the first time in all my life I armed this hand. . . . I mourned when the court-house was hung in chains; when Thomas Sims, from his dungeon, sent out his petition for prayers, and the churches did not dare to pray. I mourned when that poor outcast in yonder dungeon sent for me to visit him, and when I took him by the hand which Daniel Webster was chaining in that hour. I mourned for Webster when we prayed our prayer and sang our psalm on Long Wharf in the morning's gray. I mourned then; I shall not cease to mourn. The flags will be removed from the streets, the cannon will sound their other notes of joy; but for me, I shall go mourning all my days. I shall refuse to be comforted. O Webster! Webster! would God that I had died for thee!"

There is no sense in which these words of the great scholar and preacher find a ready response in the hearts of all of us to-day. When we look only at the simple fact that the demon of slavery had conjured American politics into such a hopeless coil that a head so clear and a heart so kind as Daniel Webster's could for a moment be beguiled into making terms with it, our feeling is likely to be that which Parker expressed with such intensity. But is such a feeling really just to Webster? Is it the kind of feeling which the historian ought to entertain toward him? I think not. When Mr. Parker published his sermon, a few months afterward, he said in his preface that he was not so vain as to fancy that he had never been mistaken in his judgments upon Mr. Webster's actions or motives; the next generation would be better able to judge that





statesman than his own contemporaries. And curiously enough, Mr. Parker added, by way of illustration, "Thomas Hutchinson and John Adams are better known now than at the day of their death; five and twenty years hence they will both be better known than at present." Of course the maker of this prophecy could not have dreamed of such a revolution as has since overtaken Hutchinson's reputation in the eyes of enlightened critics. The grand old Tory governor we no longer scout as a turncoat and traitor, but we honour him for the conscientious steadfastness with which he pursued a policy which we nevertheless pronounce mistaken. In Webster's case I believe we may go farther, and call his Seventh of March speech not only brave and honest, but statesmanlike and sound. When political passion finds free vent, it is apt to ascribe to men the lowest of motives. So Mr. Webster was accused of sacrificing his convictions and truckling to the South, in order to obtain Southern support for the presidency. But a comprehensive survey of his political career renders such an interpretation highly improbable. His conduct in remaining in Mr. Tyler's cabinet was one of the capital instances of moral courage to be found in American history; and his habitual independence of party was not the sort of thing that is wont to characterize timid seekers after the presidency. That Mr. Webster strongly wished to be President is not to be denied; but his mental attitude was the proud one that rather claimed it as a right than asked it as a favour. It was like the feeling of the soldier whose unexampled services have earned the right to assume the weightiest responsibility in the widest field of action. I do not believe that

Mr. Webster ever sacrificed his convictions to selfish or unworthy motives. That he now and then sacrificed certain convictions to certain other convictions, when he felt himself driven to such a bitter alternative, I would freely admit; but that is a very different thing. In 1850 he subordinated his feelings about slavery, just as in 1828 he had subordinated his views on the tariff to the paramount necessity of saving the Union. In the later instance, as in the earlier, there was imminent danger of nullification or secession on the part of South Carolina; and in 1850 there was added danger that the Gulf states might follow the lead of their implacable sister. Compromise seemed necessary. We have seen that, as in 1833, Mr. Webster did not always approve of compromises; but there was a special reason for supporting those of Mr. Clay in 1850. They seemed to Mr. Webster a conclusive settlement of the slavery question. The whole territory of the United States, as he said, was now covered with compromises, and the future destiny of every part, so far as the legal introduction of slavery was concerned, seemed to be decided. As for the regions to the west of Texas, he believed that slavery was ruled out by natural conditions of soil and climate, so that it was not necessary to protect them by a Wilmot proviso. As for the fugitive slave law, it was simply a provision for carrying into effect a clause of the Constitution, without which that instrument could never have been adopted and in the frequent infraction of which Mr. Webster saw a serious danger to the continuance of the Union. He therefore accepted the fugitive slave law as one feature in the proposed system of compromises; but in accepting it he offered amendments which, if they had

been adopted, would have gone far toward depriving it of its most obnoxious and irritating features. By adopting these measures of compromise, Mr. Webster believed that the extension of slavery would have been given its final limit, that the North would by reason of its free labour increase in preponderance over the South, and that by and by the institution of slavery, hemmed in and denied further expansion, would die a natural death. That these views were mistaken, the events of the next ten years showed only too plainly; but how easy it is to be wise after the event, and how completely the result of a great struggle, such as our Civil War, casts into shadow the thoughts and motives of men whose lives were ended before it began, can only be well understood by the student whose view is accustomed to range far and wide over the field of history. In order to understand Mr. Webster's position, we must put ourselves back, in imagination, to that time when the doing away with that relic of barbarism, negro slavery, seemed as far off as the doing away with its twin sister, protectionism, seems to many of us to-day. Looking at Mr. Webster's acts in such a spirit, there can be no doubt that the compromises which he sustained had their practical value in postponing the inevitable conflict for ten years, during which the relative strength of the North was increasing, and a younger generation was growing up less tolerant of slavery and more ready to discard palliatives and achieve a radical cure. So far as Mr. Webster's moral attitude was concerned, although he was not prepared for the bitter hostility that his speech provoked in many quarters, he must nevertheless have known that it was quite as likely to injure him at the North as to

gain support for him in the South; and his resolute adoption of a policy that he regarded as national rather than sectional was really an instance of high moral courage. It was, however, a concession that did violence to his sentiments of humanity, and the pain and uneasiness it occasioned is visible in some of his latest utterances.

On President Taylor's death, July 9, 1850, Mr. Webster became President Fillmore's Secretary of State. An earnest attempt was made, on the part of his friends, to secure his nomination for the presidency in 1852; but on the first ballot in the convention he received only 29 votes, while there were 131 for General Scott, and 133 for Mr. Fillmore. The efforts of Mr. Webster's adherents succeeded only in giving the nomination to Scott. The result was a grave disappointment to Mr. Webster. He refused to support the nomination, and took no part in the campaign. His health was now rapidly failing. He left Washington, September 8, for the last time, and returned to Marshfield, which he never left again, except on September 20, for a brief call upon his physician in Boston.

On the 24th of October, 1852, he died, and on the next day flags in all towns that had caught the sad news were at half-mast. I was a little boy then, and had never been in Boston or seen Mr. Webster; but I could not forget that day if I were to live a thousand years. Daniel Webster was dead. A godlike presence had gone from us. Life seemed smaller, lonelier, and meaner. I well remember catching myself wondering how the sun could rise and the daily events of life go on without Daniel Webster.



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# Essays

## Historical and Literary

BY  
JOHN FISKE

*"If thou wouldst press into the infinite, go out to all parts of the finite."*

— GOETHE.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

VOLUME II

IN FAVOURITE FIELDS

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ABBY MORGAN FISKE.

WESTGATE,  
October 15, 1902.



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, I

**OLD AND NEW WAYS OF TREATING  
HISTORY**





# I

## OLD AND NEW WAYS OF TREATING HISTORY

It would not be easy to name any king who has left behind him a more odious memory than Henry VIII. of England. The incidents of his domestic life have won for him a solitary kind of immortality. The picture of him with which most of us have grown up from childhood is that of a Bluebeard who, as soon as he got tired of a wife, would have her beheaded and forthwith marry another. Probably the popular notion of his reign does not contain much more than this, unless it be a vague remembrance of his quarrel with Rome. But forty years ago Mr. Froude set before the world a very different conception of King Henry, in which he appears as a patriot ruler, endowed with many excellent qualities of mind and heart, and much to be pitied for the perversity of fortune which attended his selection of wives. In these conclusions Mr. Froude no doubt went rather too far, as is often the case when novel views are propounded. With regard to its general effects upon the English people, Henry's rule was, on the whole, eminently good; but the fierce reign of terror which counted Sir Thomas More among its victims is something to which one is not easily reconciled, and in the king's character there are features of the ruffian which no ingenuity can explain away. As for the Bluebeard notion,


however, it is to a great extent dissipated. The domestic tragedy remains as hideous and loathsome as ever, but in the case of the two queens who lost their heads, the king appears more sinned against than sinning. Catherine Howard unquestionably brought her fate upon herself, and in all probability the same is true of Anne Boleyn, who fares worse and worse as we learn more about her. The critical historian still finds much to condemn in Henry VIII., but between his verdict and that of the traditional popular opinion there is a very wide difference.

Another instance of such a wide difference is furnished by the conduct of Edward I. with reference to the disputed succession to the throne of Scotland. A few months ago<sup>1</sup> there was published a new edition of a rather dull romance which our grandfathers used to find entertaining, "The Scottish Chiefs," by Jane Porter. I doubt if it will get many readers now. In this book the greatest of English kings, a man who, for nobility of character, was like our Washington, is recklessly charged with tyranny and bad faith, while Bruce and Wallace are treated not merely as heroes — which is all right — but as faultless heroes; even such an act as the murder of the Red Comyn in the church at Dumfries is mentioned with approval. Curiously enough the views set forth in this romance have been traditional not only in Scotland but in England, so that when Mr. Robert Seeley, in 1860, published his book entitled "The Greatest of all the Plantagenets," his defence of King Edward took many people by surprise. The question was soon afterward handled by Freeman in such a way as to set it at rest.

<sup>1</sup> 1896.

Concerning Edward's entire good faith there is no more room for doubt.

Yet another and different kind of example of the havoc wrought upon popular opinions by critical investigation is furnished by the legend of William Tell. To our grandfathers that famous archer was as real a personage as Oliver Cromwell, though doubts on the subject had been expressed in Switzerland as long ago as 1598, the story was declared to be apocryphal by a learned Swiss clergyman, named Freuden-Berger, in 1760, and it was completely exploded by the Swiss historian Kopp in 1835. The persons called William Tell and Gessler never existed in Switzerland, contemporary chroniclers never mention them, the story first appeared in print one hundred and seventy-five years after the date, 1307, when its events were said to have occurred, and, moreover, it was copied from the book of a Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus, written more than a century *before* 1307. In Saxo's book it is a Danish archer, named Palnatoki, who shoots an apple from his son's head, and the incident is placed in the year 950. The Swiss story is identical with the Danish story, and the latter is simply one version of a legend that is found in at least six different Teutonic localities, as well as in Finland, Russia, and Persia, and among the wild Samoyeds of Siberia. There can be little doubt that the story is older than the Christian era, and in the course of its wanderings it has been attached now to one locality and now to another, very much as the jokes and witticisms told a century ago of Robert Hall were in recent years ascribed to Henry Ward Beecher.



So many cherished traditions have been rudely upset as to produce a widespread feeling of helplessness with regard to historical beliefs. When one is so often proved to be mistaken, can one ever feel sure of being right? Or must we fall back upon the remark, half humorous, half cynical, once made by Sainte-Beuve, that history is, in large part, a set of fables, which men agree to believe in? The great critic should have put his remark into the past tense. Men no longer agree to believe in fables. All historical statements are beginning to be sifted. But this winnowing of the false from the true, the perpetual testing of facts and opinions, is not weakening history but strengthening it. After a vast amount of such criticism, destructive as much of it is, our views of the past are not less but more trustworthy than before.

The instances above cited may illustrate for us the first of the differences between the old and the new ways of treating history. The old-fashioned historian was usually satisfied with copying his predecessors, and thus an error once started became perpetuated; but in our time no history written in such a way would command the respect of scholars. The modern historian must go to the original sources of information, to the statutes, the diplomatic correspondence, the reports and general orders of commanding officers, the records of debates in councils and parliaments, ships' log-books, political pamphlets, printed sermons, contemporary memoirs, private diaries and letters, newspapers, broadsides, and placards, even perhaps to worm-eaten account books and files of receipts. The historian has not found the true path until he has learned to ransack such records of the past with the same untiring zeal

that animates a detective officer in seeking the hidden evidences of crime. If some other historian a century ago told the same story that we are trying to tell, he probably told it from fewer sources of information than we can now command; but if this is not the case, if a century has passed without increasing our direct information upon the story in hand, it has at least been a century of added human experience in general, so that even when we work upon the same materials as our predecessor we are likely to arrive at somewhat different conclusions. Our first rule, then, is never to rest contented with the statements of earlier historians, unless where the evidence behind such statements is no longer accessible. This is especially likely to occur with ancient history, for the various agencies for recording events were much less complete and accurate before than since the Christian era. We have a hundred ways of testing Macaulay's account of the expulsion of the Stuarts, where we have one way or no way of checking Livy's narrative of the Samnite Wars; in the one case our knowledge is like the light of midday, in the other it is but a twilight.

There are periods, however, in ancient history, concerning which our authorities are luminous, and the picture is doubtless, on the whole, as correct as those which can be framed for modern periods. The literary monuments of Greek life in the age of the Peloponnesian War—the narratives of Thucydides and Xenophon, the works of the great tragedians, the wit and drollery of Aristophanes, the dialogues of Plato, the speeches of Andokides and Lysias—with the remains of sculpture and architecture, bring that ancient society wonderfully near to us. Other periods in Athens and

Jerusalem, Alexandria and Rome, stand out before us with truthful vividness. But on the whole the registration of material for history has been much more full and consecutive since the Christian era than before it, and to this general statement the darkest of what we call the Dark Ages, as, for example, the period of Merovingian decline in the seventh and eighth centuries, forms but a partial exception. The registry of laws and edicts was supplemented by the innumerable chronicles which we owe to the marvellous industry of the monks. He who looks over a few of the seven hundred majestic volumes of the Abbé Migne's collection, will come into the fit frame of mind for admiring that gigantic and patient labour which most of us fail to revere only because its results have never appealed to our sense of sight. For literary excellence, monkish Latin has little to charm us as compared with the diction of Cicero, but in its vast treasure-houses are enshrined the documents upon which rest in great part the foundations of our knowledge of the beginnings of modern society. Ages which have left behind so much written registry of themselves are not to be set down as wholly dark.

What would English history be without the monastic chronicles of Malmesbury, of St. Albans, of Evesham, of Abingdon, and many another? If you would understand the mental condition of our forefathers in King Alfred's time, with regard to diseases, medicaments, and household science in general, there is nothing like the mass of old documents published by the Record Office under the quaint title of "Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of England."<sup>1</sup> Or

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, "Paper and Parchment," p. 279.

if it be the social condition of England under the later Plantagenets that interests us, nothing could serve our purpose better than the political poems and songs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from that same repository of national archives. The Year Books, too, containing the law reports from the eleventh century onward are an almost inexhaustible mine of material for studying the social growth of the people whose centres of national government are to-day at London and at Washington.

It is the increased facility of access to the national archives that has contributed more than anything else to the deeper and more accurate knowledge of English history which the past generation has witnessed. A few years ago it might have seemed that the seventeenth century had been exhaustively treated. With Ranke's masterly volumes and those of Guizot, with Carlyle's edition of the letters and speeches of Cromwell, and with Macaulay's fascinating narrative, one might have supposed that for some time to come there would be no further need for new books on that period. Yet, forthwith, came Mr. Rawson Gardiner, and began to rewrite the whole century. His first volume started with the year 1603, and his fourteenth arrives only at the year 1649; long life to the author! For the time which it covers, his book supersedes all others. The work was made necessary by the wholesale acquisition of fresh sources of information, settling vexed questions, filling gaps in the chain of cause and effect, and throwing a bright light upon acts and motives heretofore obscure. This acquisition of new material is one among many instances of the results that have flowed from improved ways of keeping public archives; so



that a few words upon that subject may be not without interest.

Let us be thankful to our forefathers in the old country that they did not wilfully burn their public documents, but only hid them here and there, in garrets and cellars, sheds and stables, where, but for a merciful Providence, fire and vermin would long ago have made an end of them. In 1550 it was discovered that some important Chancery records had been eaten away by the lime in the wall against which they reposed, and a few years afterward Queen Elizabeth undertook to have suitable storage provided for all such things in the Tower of London. What passed for suitable storage we may learn from a letter written a hundred years later to King Charles II. by William Prynne, Keeper of the Records: "I endeavoured the rescue of the greatest part of them from that desolation, corruption, confusion, in which (through the negligence, nescience, or slothfulness of their former keepers) they had for many years by past lain buried together in one confused chaos under corroding, putrefying cobwebs, dust, filth, in the dark corner of Cæsar's Chapel in the White Tower, as mere useless reliques. . . . The old clerks [were] unwilling to touch them for fear of fouling their fingers, spoiling their clothes, endangering their eyesight and healths by their cantankerous dust and evil scent. In raking up this dung-heap . . . I found many rare, ancient, precious pearls and golden records. But all [these] will require Briareus his hundred hands, Argus his hundred eyes, and Nestor's centuries of years, to marshal them into distinct files, and make exact alphabetical tables of the several things, names, places

comprised within them.”<sup>1</sup> Yet for nearly two centuries after this appeal the priceless records went on accumulating in such places as the White Tower, the basement of which was long used for storing gunpowder, or in the Temple and Lincoln’s Inn, where many documents perished in flames as late as 1849. It was not until 1859 that a suitable building was completed in which the national archives of Great Britain at last found a worthy home.

At the same time there came a sudden end to the jealousy with which these materials for history were withheld from public inspection. Occasionally, in former days, some eminent scholar would be allowed access to such as were accessible. Thus, in 1679, Gilbert Burnet was permitted to use such papers as might be of help in completing his “History of the Reformation.” For such permission a warrant from the lord chamberlain or one of the secretaries of state was required, and there was red tape enough to deter all but the most persistent seekers. About 1850 the wise master of rolls, Lord Romilly, put an end to all this privacy, and now you can go to the Record Office and read the despatches of Oliver Cromwell or the letters of Mary Stuart as easily as you would go to a public library and look over the new books.

But this is not all. As fast as is practicable the state papers, chronicles, charters, court rolls, and other archives of Great Britain are published in handsome volumes carefully edited, so that the whole world may read them. Year by year enlarges the ability of the American scholar to inspect the sources of British history by visiting some large library on this side of the Atlantic.

<sup>1</sup> “Paper and Parchment,” p. 256.

I need not dwell upon these facts. One can easily see that the appearance of fresh material must now and then oblige us to reverse, and often to modify, our judgments upon men and events. The student of history who has once learned how to go to the source will never be satisfied with working at second hand. And the multiplication of sources goes on. What I have mentioned of the British archives has gone on in other countries, although it is not everywhere that access has been made so easy. Many secrets of European history are still locked up in the Vatican, to reward the persistent curiosity of a future generation. Meanwhile the Italian government publishes, in a series of magnificent folios, all the original material that it can find in Italian libraries concerning the discovery of America; and the publication, year by year, of the records of the India House at Seville keeps throwing fresh light upon that intricate subject. In such musty records there is no quarter from which valuable information may not be derived. A few years ago I showed, by a comparison of extracts from old Spanish account books, that the younger Pinzon, the commander of Columbus's smallest caravel in 1492, was not absent from Spain during the year 1506; and this little point went a long way toward settling two or three important historical questions.<sup>1</sup>

It is not only public documents that thus come forward to help us, but every year witnesses the publication of private memoirs and correspondence. What a flood of light is thrown upon the Wars of the Roses by the Paston Letters, written by members of a Norfolk family from 1422 to 1509. Public attention was first

<sup>1</sup> "Discovery of America," II., p. 68.

drawn to these papers about a century ago, but the last edition, published in 1872, contained more than four hundred letters never before printed. In recent years we have added to our resources for studying American history many new letters of Patrick Henry, George Mason, Gouverneur Morris, John Dickinson, Manasseh Cutler, the older and younger Tyler, and many others. Most important of all, in some respects, are the Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson, last royal governor of Massachusetts, published in London about ten years ago by one of his great-grandsons; it is impossible to study this book without having one's conception of the beginnings of the American Revolution in some points slightly, in others profoundly, modified.

In curious ways things keep turning up for the first time or else attracting fresh attention. A certain beautiful map, made in Lisbon between September 7 and November 19, 1502, has been lying now for nearly four centuries in the Ducal Library at Modena, where it was left by the husband of Lucretia Borgia. About fifteen years ago it was noticed that this map contains a delineation of the peninsula of Florida, with twenty-two Spanish names on the coast, several of them misunderstood and deformed by the Portuguese draughtsman. As this is positive proof that Florida was visited by Spaniards before September 7, 1502, the long-neglected map has suddenly become a historical document of the first importance.

Again, during our Revolutionary War a certain British adventurer, named Charles Lee, was at one time the senior general under Washington in the Continental army. Having been taken prisoner by the

British and locked up in the City Hall at New York, he tried to mend his fortunes by giving treasonable aid to the enemy, and in an elaborate paper he unfolded what seemed to him the best plan for overthrowing the Americans. General Howe's secretary, Sir Henry Strachey, carried this paper home to England, with other papers, and stowed them all away in the library of his country house in Somerset. There, after a slumber of more than eighty years, Lee's treasonable paper was found, and it became necessary to rewrite nearly two years of our military history. Still more curious was the career of the manuscript "History of Plymouth," by William Bradford, one of the first governors of the colony. This precious manuscript was used and quoted by several New England writers, and came into the possession of the Rev. Thomas Prince, pastor of the Old South Church, who died in 1758. This learned antiquarian kept his books in a little room in the steeple, which he used as a study, and bequeathed them to the church.<sup>1</sup> After the British troops evacuated Boston in 1779, it was presently found that the Bradford MS. had vanished. Perhaps some officer had read it with interest and confiscated it to his own uses. At all events, it turned up in 1853 in the Bishop of London's palace at Fulham, and it has since been published, as the very corner-stone of New England history. A fragment of the same Governor Bradford's letter-book was found in a grocer shop in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and was published in 1794. This reminds one of the first folio of the Spanish historian Oviedo, printed in 1526. Of this valuable book only two copies are known to be in existence, and one

<sup>1</sup> Hill's "History of the Old South Church," II., p. 54.

of these was rescued from a butcher in Madrid just as he was tearing a sheet from it to wrap a sirloin of beef which a servant-girl had purchased. It has always been a matter of regret that we have had no minutes of the proceedings of the Congress which was assembled in New York in 1765 for considering the Stamp Act, but I am told that such minutes have lately been discovered in a chest of old papers, soaked and mouldy, under a leaky roof in a Maryland attic. But this is nothing to the Rip van Winkle slumber of Aristotle's essay on the Constitution of Athens, from which European scholars used to quote as late as the sixth century after Christ, but of which nothing has been seen since the ninth century until the other day a copy was found in an Egyptian tomb. On one side of the sheets of papyrus is an account of receipts and expenditures kept by the steward or bailiff of a gentleman's private estate in the years 78 and 79 after Christ; on the other side is the long-lost essay of Aristotle, a most valuable contribution to Greek history, which now, since its publication in 1891, may be read like any other Greek book. From other Egyptian tombs have been recovered a part of one of the lost tragedies of Euripides, interesting passages from Athenian orators, and the account of the Crucifixion from the Greek gospel attributed by the early Fathers to St. Peter,—an intensely interesting narrative, which was published in London in 1894.

In recalling such illustrations, one is in danger of straying from one's main thesis, and so I will only add that, with the progress of the arts, there are found various new ways of making original materials accessible. Here photography has done wonders. Old

parchments can be reproduced with strictest accuracy, with all their stains and rents and cracks and smooches, and with our magnifying-glass we may patiently scrutinize each small detail and satisfy ourselves as to whether it has been rightly interpreted.

A beautiful example of this is furnished by the book of an American scholar, whose premature death science mourns. "The Finding of Wineland," by Arthur Middleton Reeves, contains complete photographic facsimiles of the three famous Icelandic manuscripts which tell of the Norse discovery of America. Another example is the gigantic work of another American, Benjamin Stevens, who is publishing in London a hundred volumes of diplomatic correspondence relating to the American Revolution, the whole of it reproduced by photography. The time has thus arrived when the scholar, without stirring from his chimney-corner, may send by mail to distant countries and obtain strict copies of things that it would once have cost months of travelling to see. It is not hoped that the time will come when an occasional literary pilgrimage, with its keen pleasures, can be quite dispensed with; nor is it likely to come. But we see how much has been done toward bringing the historian face to face with his sources of information.

The increasing disposition to insist upon knowledge at first hand, which distinguishes the new from the old ways of treating history, is but one phase of the scientific and realistic spirit of the age in which we live. It is one of the marks of the growing intellectual maturity that comes with civilization. There is nothing to show that the highly trained minds of the present day are wider in grasp or deeper in pene-

tration than those of many past ages, but in some respects they are more mature than those of any past age, and one chief symptom of this maturity is the strict deference paid to facts. This marks the historic spirit as it marks the scientific spirit. In children the respect for facts is very imperfectly developed. The presence of wild exaggeration or deliberate fiction in children's stories does not necessarily imply dishonesty or love of lying. The child's world is not coldly realistic, it is full of make-believe; it has subjective needs that demand expression even if objective truthfulness gets somewhat slighted. The Italians have a pithy proverb, *Si non e vero e ben, trovato*, which defies literal translation into English, but which means, If it isn't true, at all events, it hits the mark. In the childish type of a story, it is above all things desired to hit the mark, to produce the effect. Edification is the prime requisite; accuracy is subordinate. There never was an adult mind more scrupulously loyal to fact than that of Charles Darwin, but in a chapter of autobiography he says: "I may here confess that as a little boy I was much given to inventing deliberate falsehoods, and this was always done for the sake of causing excitement. For instance, I once gathered much valuable fruit from my father's trees and hid it in the shrubbery, and then ran in breathless haste to spread the news that I had discovered a hoard of stolen fruit."<sup>1</sup> This kind of romancing is not peculiar to children, but continues to characterize the untrained adult mind, as in the yarns of old soldiers and sailors, and it is liable to persist wherever one's professional pursuits call for intense devotion to some

<sup>1</sup> Darwin's "Life and Letters," I., p. 28.



immediate practical object. Strong partisanship in politics or in theology is thus unfavourable to accuracy of statement, and the advocates of sundry social reforms are noted for a tendency to "draw the long bow." Since edification is the first desideratum, the facts must be squeezed and twisted, if need be, so as to furnish it.. "They can bear it, poor things," we can fancy our preacher saying; "they are used to it."

A certain obtuseness, or lack of sensitive perception, with regard to truthful accuracy has thus been widely prevalent among mankind. At times this has shown itself in the production of pseudonymous literature, or books bearing the names of other persons than their real authors. The two centuries preceding and the two centuries following the Christian era were especially an age in which pseudonymous literature was fashionable, and to this class belong some writings of great importance in the early Church. There was no dishonesty in this, no intention to deceive the public. It was simply one of the crude methods first adopted without premeditation when earnest preachers of novel doctrines sought to influence communities on a wide scale by the written rather than the spoken word. Any book that contained ideas known or believed to be those of some eminent teacher was liable to be ascribed to him as its author. And the claim, uncritically made, was uncritically accepted.

In this connection may be mentioned the common practice of ancient historians in inventing speeches. When Thucydides, for example, describes the interesting debate at Sparta that ushered in the Peloponnesian War, he makes all the characters talk in the first person, — the Corinthian envoys, the envoy

from Athens, the venerable King Archidamas, the implacable Jingo Stheneläidas; but the words that came from their lips are the words of the historian. He knows in general the kind of sentiments that each one represented, and he makes up their speeches accordingly. No doubt the readers of Thucydides understood how this was done, and nobody was misled by it; but a critical age would not tolerate such a fashion. The critical scholar wants either the real thing or nothing; when inverted commas are used in connection with the first person singular, he wants to see the very words that came from the speaker, even with their faults of grammar or of taste. Half a century ago the letters of George Washington were edited by the late President Sparks of Harvard, who felt himself called upon to amend them. Where the writer said "Old Put," the editor would change it to "General Putnam," and where Washington exclaims that "things are in a devil of a state," he is made to observe that "our affairs have reached a deplorable condition." This sort of editing belongs to the *old* ways of treating history. The spirit of the new ways was long ago expressed by honest Oliver Cromwell, when he said to the artist, "Paint me as I am — mole and all!"

It has become difficult for us, in these days of punctilious antiquarian realism, to understand the tolerance of anachronisms that formerly prevailed in literature and on the stage, when in the tragedies of Corneille and Racine the wrathful Achilles and Agamemnon, king of men, not only reviled each other in the court phrases of Versailles, but strutted about in bag-wigs and lace ruffles, while Klytemnestra lifted

her ample hoop-skirts in a graceful courtesy. In such matters our keener historic sense has become exacting. A few years ago, when I visited one of the Alaska missions, my attention was called to a large picture of the Adoration of the Magi, painted by a young Indian. It was a remarkable piece of work, and had some points of real merit, but it was noticeable that all the faces—those of the Virgin and Child, of St. Joseph and the Wise Men—were Indian faces. This red man's method was the primitive method. The age of Louis XIV. had not quite outgrown it. But the change since then has been like the change from coaches to railways. History is made to serve the arts, and in turn has pressed the arts into her service. Sculptor and architect, painter and poet, must alike delve in the past for principles and for illustrations. We have even known the conscientious poet to set public opinion right on a matter of history. One of the commonplaces of history, one of the things that everybody knows, is that Cotton Mather was one of the chief instigators and promoters of the witchcraft horrors in Salem; yet, like many of the things that everybody knows, it is not true. The notion started in a slanderous publication by one of Mather's enemies, and was repeated parrot-like by one historian after another, including the late George Bancroft, until it occurred to the poet Longfellow to take some of the incidents of the Salem witchcraft as the theme of a tragedy. In order to catch the very spirit of 1692, the poet studied with his customary critical thoroughness the original papers relating to the affair, until he perceived that Cotton Mather's part in it was not an instigating but a restraining part, and that if

his written injunctions had been heeded not one of the nineteen victims could have been sent to the gallows. When the poem was published, exhibiting the great clergyman in this new light, some sage critics shook their heads and muttered, "Poetic license!" But it has been abundantly proved that Longfellow was quite right.


I have said enough about going to original sources. It is time to point out a different sort of contrast between old and new ways of treating history. Let us consider how history began. In primitive times, of which modern savage life is a wayside survival, after a tribe had returned from a successful campaign, there was a grand celebration. Amid feast and hilarity, booty was divided and captives were slaughtered. Then the warriors painted their faces and danced about the fire, while medicine-men chanted the prowess of the victorious chieftain and boasted the number of enemies slain. There were also sacrifices to the tutelar ghost-deities, and homage was paid to their ancestral virtues. In such practices epic poetry and history had their common origin, and it must be said that to this day history retains some of the traces of its savage infancy. With most people it is still little more than a glorified form of ancestor-worship. One sees this not only in the difficulty of arousing general interest in events that have happened at a distance, but also in the absurdly narrow views which different countries or different sections of the same country take with regard to matters of common interest. In reading French historians one perpetually feels the presence of the tacit assumption that divides the human race into Frenchmen and Barbarians; but in this regard

Frenchmen, though perhaps the most hopeless, are by no means the only sinners. Through the literature of all nations runs that same ludicrous assumption that our people are better than other people, and from this it is but a short step to the kindred assumption that the same national acts which are wrongful in other people are meritorious in ourselves. The feelings which underlie these assumptions are simply evanescent forms of the feelings which in a savage state of society make warfare perpetual, and they are in no wise commendable. Their most stupid and contemptible phase is that which prompts the different sections of a common country to twit and flout one another with the various misdeeds of their respective ancestors. Such pettiness of outlook is incompatible with an intelligent conception of the career of mankind. That some people have been more favourably situated than others, that some have accomplished more in sundry directions than others, is not to be denied. The study of such facts and their causes is one of fascinating interest, and forms part of the most important work of the historian; but so long as he allows his views to be coloured by fondness for one people as such, and dislike for another people as such, his conclusions are sure to be warped and to some extent weakened. The late Mr. Freeman was a historian of vast knowledge, wide sympathies, and unusual breadth of view, but he was afflicted by two inveterate prejudices,—one against Frenchmen, the other against the House of Austria,—and the damage thereby caused is flagrant in some parts of his field of work and traceable in many more.

History must not harbour prejudices, because the

spirit proper for history is the spirit proper for science. The two are identical. The word "history" is a Greek word, originally meaning "inquiry." Aristotle named one of his great works "a history concerning animals," whence from Pliny and in modern usage we often hear of "natural history." It is the business of the historian to inquire into the past experience of the human race, in order to arrive at general views that are correct, in which case they will furnish lessons useful for the future. It is a task of exceeding delicacy, and the dispassionate spirit of science is needed for its successful performance. Science does not love or hate its subjects of investigation; the historian must exercise like self-control. I do not mean that he should withhold his moral judgment; he will respect intelligence and bow down to virtue, he will expose stupidity and denounce wickedness, wherever he encounters them, but he will not lose sight of the ultimate aim to detect the conditions under which certain kinds of human actions thrive or fail; and that is a scientific aim.

Yet another difference between old and new methods invites our attention. The old-fashioned history, still retaining the marks of its barbaric origin, dealt with little save kings and battles and court intrigues. It consisted mainly of details concerning persons. Since the middle of the eighteenth century more attention has been paid to the history of commerce and finance, to geographical circumstances, to the social conditions of peoples, to the changes in beliefs, to the progress of literature and art. A modern book which is remarkable for the skill with which it follows all the threads in the story of national progress simultaneously, and in



one vast and superb picture shows each element co-operating with the others, is the well-known "History of the English People" by John Richard Green. Both Green and Freeman were friends of mine, and I am tempted to relate an incident which illustrates their different points of view. Freeman's conception of history was more restricted, though within his narrower sphere he took a vast sweep. Most people remember his definition, "History is past politics and politics are present history." One day he took Green to task in a friendly way: "I say, Johnny, if you'll just leave out all that stuff about art and literature and how people dressed and furnished their houses, your book will be all right; as it is, you are spoiling its unity." Fortunately this advice went unheeded. The poetic quality of Green's genius controlled that immense wealth of material without injuring the unity of the narrative, and gave us a book that represents the highest grade of historical work in our time and is likely to live as a classic.

In the first half of the nineteenth century some confused attempts were made to treat history like a physical science, and trace the destinies of nations to peculiarities in climate and soil, ignoring moral causes. There was also an inclination to underrate the work of great men, and ascribe all results to vaguely conceived general tendencies. Against these views there came a spasmodic reaction which asserted that history is nothing but the biographies of great men. The former view was most conspicuously represented by Buckle, the latter by Carlyle and Froude. Concerning the point at issue between them, it may be said that since general tendencies are manifested only in the thoughts

and actions of men, it is these that the historian must study, and that as causal agencies a Cromwell or a Luther may count for more than a million ordinary men; but after all, our ultimate source of enlightenment still lies in the study of the general conditions under which the activity of our Cromwell or Luther was brought forth. Most minds find pleasure in personal incidents, while a few have the knowledge and the capacity for sustained thinking that are needed for penetrating to the general causes. There is a type of mind that is interested chiefly in what is unusual or catastrophic; but it is a more scientific type that is interested in tracing the silent operation of common and familiar facts. By this latter method physical science has prospered in recent days as never before, and the same has been the case with the study of history.

Allusion has been made to the useful lessons that may be found in the study of the past. In searching for such lessons great care must be taken to avoid the fallacy of reasoning from loose analogies. This common fallacy is injured by the pernicious habit of arguing from words without stopping to consider the things to which the words are applied. For example, many Americans seem to suppose that our government is like that of France because both are called republics, and unlike that of England because the latter is represented by a hereditary sovereign. In point of fact, the government of France is substantially the same, whether it is called an empire or a republic; in neither case do the French people have self-government; the resemblances to the United States are superficial and the differences are fundamental. Whereas,



on the other hand, the people of England govern themselves as effectively as the people of the United States, and the differences are superficial and the resemblances are fundamental. Yet, as a rule, people cannot free themselves from the trammels of names, and any community of ignorant half-breed Indians ruled by an irresponsible despot is thought worthy of our special sympathy if that despot happens to be labelled president rather than king.

A flagrant instance of reasoning from loose analogies was furnished about a century ago by an English member of Parliament, William Mitford, who wrote a history of Greece under the influence of his overmastering dread of parliamentary reform. His first volume appeared in 1784, when the reformers seemed on the eve of the victory which they did not really win till 1832. Mitford wished to show that democracy is always and everywhere an unmitigated evil, and he used the history of Athens to point his moral, although Athenian democracy was not really like anything in the modern world. A more curious distortion of facts than Mitford's "History of Greece" has seldom been put into print.

When Grote, half a century later, wrote his magnificent "History of Greece," he appeared as the champion of Athens. He, too, was a member of Parliament, an advanced free-thinker and democrat. It was as natural for him to love the Athenians as for Mitford to hate them, and possibly his sympathies may once or twice have urged him a little too far. But his mental powers and his scholarship were immeasurably greater than Mitford's, and he did not try to force a lesson from his facts; he tried to understand the people

whom he described. The result was a picture of the old Greek world so faithful and so brilliant that it cannot soon be superseded. A German history of Greece was afterward written by Ernst Curtius, — a charming book, rich in learning and thought. But the experience of the Englishman as the native of a free country gave him an advantage in understanding the Athenians, the lack of which we feel seriously when we read the German work. A similar deficiency, due to similar shortcomings in political training, we find in one of the greatest works of the nineteenth century, Mommsen's "History of Rome."

But while Grote achieved such success in depicting the free world of Hellas, he was less successful when he came to the Macedonian Conquest, and with the close of the generation contemporary with Alexander the Great he seemed to lose his interest in the subject. His history stops at that point with words of farewell that echo the mournful spirit of baffled Demosthenes. The spectacle of free Greece was so beautiful and inspiring that one cannot bear to see it come to an end. Yet the diffusion of Greek culture through the Roman world, from the Euphrates to the shores of Britain, is a theme of no less interest and importance. In many ways the learned and thoughtful books of Mr. Mahaffy illustrate this point. It may suffice here to observe that, without a careful study of the three centuries following Alexander, one cannot hope to understand the circumstances of the greatest event in all history, the spreading of Christianity over the Roman Empire.

We are thus led to notice another important difference between the old and the new ways. The old-

fashioned student of history was apt to confine his attention to the so-called classical period, such as the age of Perikles, or of Augustus, or of Elizabeth, or of Louis XIV. Such a habit is fatal to the acquirement of anything like a true perspective in history. What should we say of the botanist who should confine himself to Jacqueminot roses and neglect what gardeners call weeds? How far would the ornithologist ever get who should study only nightingales and birds of paradise? In truth the dull ages which no Homer has sung nor Tacitus described have sometimes been critical ages for human progress. Such was the eighth century of the Christian era, which witnessed the rise of the Carlovingians; and such again was the eleventh, the time of Hildebrand and William the Norman. This restriction of the view to literary ages has had much to do with the popular misconception of the thousand years that elapsed between the reign of Theodoric the Great and the discovery of America. For many reasons that period may rightly be called the Middle Ages; but the popular mind is apt to lump those ten centuries together, as if they were all alike, and to apply to them the misleading epithet, Dark Ages. A portion of the darkness is in the minds of those who use the epithet. The Germanic reorganization of Europe, and the fearful struggle with Islam, did indeed involve a break with the ancient civilization, but there was no such absolute gulf as that which exists in the popular imagination. The darkest age was perhaps that of the wicked Frankish queens, Brunhild and Fredegonda; but the career of civilization was then far more secure than it had been a thousand years earlier, in the age of Perikles, when all

Europe, except a few Greek cities, was immersed in dense barbarism.

A similar exclusive devotion to literary or classical periods leads us to misjudge certain communities as well as certain ages. Our perspective thus gets warped in space as well as in time. Few persons realize the great importance of the Roman Empire of the East, all the way from Justinian to the iniquitous capture of Constantinople by the French and Venetians in 1204. In these ages Constantinople was the chief centre of culture; through her commercial relations with Genoa, she exercised a civilizing influence over the whole of western Europe, and she was the military bulwark of Christendom first against Saracen, then against Turk, until at last she succumbed in an evil hour which we have not yet ceased to mourn. Largely for want of a period of classical literature the so-called Byzantine Empire has been grievously underrated.<sup>1</sup>

But the worst distortion of perspective in our study of the career of mankind is one of which we have only lately begun to rid ourselves. It is the distortion caused by supercilious neglect of the lower races. In the course of the fifteenth century the expansion of maritime enterprise brought civilized Europeans for the first time into contact with races of queer-looking men with black or red skins, often hideous in feature and uncouth in their customs. They called such people savages, and the name has been loosely applied to a vast number of groups of men in widely different stages of culture, but all alike falling far short of the European level. Such people have no literature, and

<sup>1</sup> In the original manuscript Dr. Fiske makes a marginal annotation — "Also ill feeling of western Europe toward Greek Church."

their customs are often unpleasant; and so they have been unduly despised. Fortunately travellers have given copious descriptions of savage and barbarous tribes, but they have been lazily accepted as freaks or oddities, and it is only lately that they have been subjected to serious study, comparison, and analysis. It is not too much to say that this has wrought a greater change in our conception of human history than all other causes put together. For it has formed the occasion for a vast extension of the comparative method. Early in the present century something like a new Renaissance was begun when Englishmen in India began to study Sanskrit, and were struck with its resemblance to the languages of Europe. The first result of such studies was the beginning of comparative philology in the establishment of the Aryan family of languages; pretty soon there followed the comparative study of myths and folk-tales; and then came comparative jurisprudence, which, for the world of English readers, is chiefly associated with the beautiful writings of Sir Henry Maine. Next it began to appear that many problems which remain insoluble so long as we confine our attention to the Aryan world soon yield up their secret if we extend our comparison so as to include the speech, the beliefs, and the customs of savages. In taking this great step the name of an American investigator, the late Lewis Morgan, with his profound classification of stages of human culture, stands foremost; and the work of our Bureau of Ethnology at Washington, under the masterly direction of Major Powell, is doing more toward a correct interpretation of the beginnings of human society than was ever done

before. It is proved beyond a doubt that the institutions of civilized society are descended from institutions like those now to be observed in savage society. Savages and barbarians are simply races that have remained in phases of culture which more civilized races have outgrown; and hence one helps to explain the other. Certain obscure local institutions, for example, in ancient Greece and Rome, have been made quite intelligible by the study of similar institutions among American Indians. In these ways history, without ceasing to be a study of individuals and nations, has come to be in the broadest sense the study of the growth and decay of institutions.

Thus for a good many reasons we see that the new ways of treating history are better than the old. We are better equipped for getting at the truth, and it is a larger kind of truth when we have got it. Yet the historian is forgetting his highest duty if he allows himself to become unjust to the men of past times. There were giants in former days, and if we can see farther than they, it is because we stand upon their shoulders. Nor will all our boasted science make great historians, in the absence of the native genius. Let us never fail in reverence to the masters of our craft. The world will never know a more delightful narrator than Herodotus, careful and critical as we now know him to be, wide in outlook and keenly inquisitive, with his touches of quaint philosophy and his delicious Ionic diction. Or consider Thucydides, with his mournful story of the war in which the Peloponnesian states combine against Athens, one of the greatest crimes known to history, — somewhat such a crime as war between the United States and Great

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Britain would be to-day. In the rugged sentences of Thucydides we are brought face to face with the most powerful intellect except Shakespeare's that ever dealt with historic themes. Thence it is indeed a falling off to the mild, urbane, if you please superficial, Xenophon; but who can weary of that exquisite Attic prose, or read without choking the cry of the Ten Thousand on catching sight of the friendly sea? Then a word must be said of grave and wise Polybius, most trustworthy of guides, and brilliant Tacitus, pithy and pungent, but now and then too fond of pointing a moral and needing at such times to be taken with a grain of salt. The pictures of the ancient world in Plutarch, though not always accurate in detail, have an ethical value that is beyond price. We must not forget Gregory of Tours, the honest, credulous bishop whose uncouth Latin gives such a vivid portrayal of Merovingian times; nor charming Froissart, with his mediæval French, bringing before us a world of belted knights and jewelled dames, where common people have no claim to notice. A century later the statesmanlike Commines and much slandered Machiavelli show us the victory of Reynard over Isegrim, of organizing intelligence over the cruder forces of feudalism, while the saintly Las Casas tells of the discovery of America and the deeds of the Spanish conquerors. In Vico we see a great intellect failing in the premature attempt to make history scientific, and then we pass on to Voltaire, the witchery of whose matchless style in his "*Essai sur les Mœurs*" reveals a grasp of universal history in perspective such as no man before him had attained. Finally, with a grasp scarcely inferior to Voltaire's, the gigantic learning of

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Gibbon, aided by marvellous artistic sense in the grouping of huge masses of detail, gives us what is in many ways the greatest book of history that ever was written. It now needs to be supplemented at many points, but it is not easy to look forward to a time when it can be superseded. It is curious to note the contrast between this book and one that used always to be associated with it in men's minds. "The History of England," by David Hume, has lived more than a century, partly because of its fine narrative style, partly because of the absence, until recently, of any better book of convenient size; but it was never in any sense a great history, and it is now worse than worthless to the general reader. The reason for this is its lack of knowledge of the subject with which it deals. It is the superficial and careless work of a man of brilliant genius. In contrast with this the untiring patience of Gibbon, his exhaustless wealth of knowledge, his almost miraculous accuracy, his disinterested calmness of spirit, his profundity of critical discernment, combined with the artistic temperament to produce a work as enduring as the Eternal City itself. And with this example my concluding advice to the student of new methods is, Forget not to profit by the old masters.





**II**

**JOHN MILTON**



## II

### JOHN MILTON

To bring a sketch of John Milton within the compass of a single hour seems much like attempting the feat described by Jules Verne, of making the journey around the world in eighty days. In the dimensions of that human personality there is a cosmic vastness which one can no more comprehend in a few general statements than one could sum up in some brief formula the surface of our planet, with all its varied configuration, all its rich and marvellous life. There have been other men, indeed, more multifarious in their worth than Milton, men whose achievements have been more diversified. Doubtless the genius of Michael Angelo was more universal, Shakespeare touched a greater number of springs in the human heart; and such a spectacle as that of Goethe, making profound and startling discoveries in botany and comparative anatomy while busy with the composition of "Faust," we do not find in the life of Milton. A mere catalogue dealing with the Puritan poet and his works would be shorter than many another catalogue. But when we seek words in which to convey a critical estimate of the man and what he did, we find that we have a world upon our hands. Professor Masson, of the University of Edinburgh, has written the "Life of Milton" in six large octavos; he has given as much space to the subject as Gibbon gave to the "Decline and

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retched wings, the family crest of the Miltons.

It was here, at the Spread Eagle, that the scrivener's  
eldest son, John Milton, the poet, was born on the 9th  
of December, 1608. The house, which was afterward  
burned in the Great Fire of 1666, stood in the very  
heart of London, which was then a city with scarcely  
200,000 inhabitants and had not quite lost the rural  
look and quality. The house stood not only within  
the sound of Bow bells, but in the very shadow of the  
belfry where they were hung, and hard by was the  
Mermaid Tavern, whither one can fancy that Shake-  
speare, resorting on his last visit to London in 1614,  
may well have passed by the scrivener's door and  
smiled upon the beautiful boy of six with his delicate  
rosy cheeks and wealth of auburn curls. Throughout  
life, Milton's personal beauty attracted attention; the  
great soul was enshrined in a worthy tabernacle.  
Several portraits of him, painted at different ages, are  
still preserved. We can imagine the honest pride  
with which the father took him, when ten years old,  
to sit to Cornelius Jansen. The charming picture,  
which has often been engraved, lights up for us the  
story of the poet's childhood. It shows us a grave  
but sweet and happy face, of which the prevailing  
character, as Professor Masson has well said, is "a  
lovable seriousness." Under it the first engraver in-  
scribed these lines from "Paradise Regained":—

"When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,  
What might be public good : myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth  
And righteous things."

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It was here, at the Spread Eagle, that the scrivener's eldest son, John Milton, the poet, was born on the 9th of December, 1608. The house, which was afterward burned in the Great Fire of 1666, stood in the very heart of London, which was then a city with scarcely 200,000 inhabitants and had not quite lost the rural look and quality. The house stood not only within the sound of Bow bells, but in the very shadow of the belfry where they were hung, and hard by was the Mermaid Tavern, whither one can fancy that Shakespeare, resorting on his last visit to London in 1614, may well have passed by the scrivener's door and smiled upon the beautiful boy of six with his delicate rosy cheeks and wealth of auburn curls. Throughout life, Milton's personal beauty attracted attention; the great soul was enshrined in a worthy tabernacle. Several portraits of him, painted at different ages, are still preserved. We can imagine the honest pride with which the father took him, when ten years old, to sit to Cornelius Jansen. The charming picture, which has often been engraved, lights up for us the story of the poet's childhood. It shows us a grave but sweet and happy face, of which the prevailing character, as Professor Masson has well said, is "a lovable seriousness." Under it the first engraver inscribed these lines from "Paradise Regained":—

"When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,  
What might be public good : myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth  
And righteous things."



Fall of the Roman Empire," yet we do not feel that he has treated it at undue length.

The Milton family belonged to the yeomanry of Oxfordshire. They were just such plain, brave, intelligent people as the great body of those who migrated to New England. About five miles from Oxford there lived, in the reign of Elizabeth, one Richard Milton, who was a ranger or keeper of the Forest of Shotover. In 1563 there was born to him a son John, just a few months before the birth of William Shakespeare in the neighbouring town of Stratford-on-Avon. Richard Milton was a stanch Roman Catholic. In due course of time his son John became a student at Oxford, and was converted to Protestantism. One day the father picked up an English Bible in the son's room. High words ensued; the young man, sturdy and defiant, was cast off and disinherited, and so presently made his way to London and set up in business as a scrivener. In that business were combined the occupations of the notary public with some of those of the solicitor. This John Milton not only took affidavits, but drew up contracts and deeds, and probably helped his clients to invest their money. The selling of law books and stationery was also part of the scrivener's business, in which professional man and tradesman were thus quaintly mixed. The scrivener Milton was distinguished for intelligence and integrity; he became wealthy, or at any rate extremely comfortable in circumstances, and he won general respect and confidence. At the age of thirty-seven he married a lady named Sarah Bradshaw. In the simple, cosey fashion of those days, the family lived over the office or shop, which was in Bread Street, Cheapside, with no street

number to mark it, but the sign of an eagle with outstretched wings, the family crest of the Miltons.

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There is no doubt that this consecration of himself to a lofty ideal of life was begun in early childhood. In this earnestness of mood, this clear recognition of the seriousness of life and its duties, Milton was a born Puritan. But along with this general temperament, the lines here quoted tell us of something more. The youthful Milton was conscious, dimly at first but more distinctly with advancing years, of a mission which he was sent into the world to fulfil. An acquaintance of his, John Aubrey, tells us that he had begun to write verses before his tenth year. It seems clear that he was still very young when the vocation of the poet came before his mind as the calling which he should like to adopt, to which he would fain consecrate his life. But the true poet is far more than a builder of rhymes; he is the man who sees the deepest truths that concern humanity, and knows how to proclaim them with power and authority such as no other kind of man save the poet can wield. So the boy Milton felt himself "born to promote all truth and righteous things," and to this end he became eager to learn and know, in order to act for the public good. By his twelfth year the raging thirst for knowledge had so far possessed him that he commonly sat at his books until after midnight.

It was in a refined and pleasant home that this boy grew up. His father was at once indulgent and wise, his mother gentle; there was an older sister and a younger brother; good company came to the house. The scrivener Milton was a musical composer of merit enough to be mentioned in contemporary books alongside of such masters as Tallis and Orlando Gibbons. The house in Bread Street had an organ, upon which

the young Milton learned to play with skill and power. He also played on the bass viol, and to the end of his days his interest in music never flagged. We may suppose that from the father's genius the son inherited that delicate appreciation of vocal sounds which makes his poetry the most melodious ever written in English, — sometimes rivalled, but never excelled, by Shakespeare in his sonnets and in the snatches of song that sparkle in his plays.

In those days, precocious boys were almost always intended by their parents for the Church, and such was the case with Milton. From his twelfth to his sixteenth year he went to the school in St. Paul's churchyard, which the famous reformer Colet had founded a century before. At the same time, he read at home with a tutor, a canny Scotch Presbyterian, named Thomas Young. At the age of sixteen, besides his Greek and Latin, Milton had learned French and Italian thoroughly, and had made a good beginning in Hebrew. Soon after his sixteenth birthday, he entered college, but not at Oxford, where his father had studied. No reason is assigned for sending him to Cambridge, but the reason seems self-evident. The inveterate Toryism of Oxford — if I may call it by the word which came into use a few years later — must have been distasteful to his Puritan family. The eastern counties were becoming more and more a hotbed for free thinking in religion and politics, probably because of their frequent intercourse with the Netherlands. The atmosphere of Cambridge was charged with Puritanism and denial of the divine right of kingship; one might have seen there many harbingers of the coming storm. Early in 1625 Milton entered Christ's



College, Cambridge, and there he lived for seven years and a half. His study and bedroom, unaltered since his time, are still shown to visitors; and in the beautiful garden — most beautiful, perhaps, of the gardens in that exquisite country town — you may see the mulberry tree, many centuries old, with its decrepit boughs still resting on the wooden props which Milton's loving care placed under them.

Of his life at Cambridge we have not many details. More than once his proud, independent spirit got him into difficulties. There is a story that he was once flogged by one of the tutors, but it is not well supported; he seems, however, to have been at one time punished with what in an American college would be called "suspension." The cause was not neglect of study or serious misbehaviour, but defiant independence. He had none of youth's wild or vicious inclinations; then, as always, his conduct was without spot or flaw. It was part of his lofty conception of the poet's calling that the poet's soul should admit no kind of defilement in thought or deed. No priest or prophet ever more devoutly revered the work for which God had chosen him than this Puritan poet. The feeling of religious consecration and self-devotion finds strong expression in the sonnet written on his reaching the age of twenty-three: —

“How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!  
My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom sheweth.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,  
That I to manhood am arrived so near,  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear  
That some more timely-happy spirits endureth.


Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure even  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven ;—  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."

One is reminded by this of Goethe's simile of the star which, without hasting but without resting, fulfils the destiny assigned it. The spirit is that of the old monkish injunction, to study as if for life eternal but to live prepared to die to-morrow, the very spirit of consecration to a lofty purpose.<sup>1</sup> That Milton at the age of twenty-three should have felt any lack of inward ripeness seems odd when we know that his scholarship was already generally recognized as greater than had ever been seen at Cambridge, save perhaps when Erasmus was teaching Greek there. When Milton took his master's degree the next year he was urged to stay and accept a fellowship. But at that time it was necessary for the fellow of a college to be in holy orders, and although Milton's parents had meant that he should be a clergyman, he had by this time discovered that he required more liberty of thought and speech than could be found in the Church. In his own forcible words, "I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." So he left Cambridge and went home. For a moment he thought of taking law as a profession, but it was clear that such a course would tend to defeat his cherished purpose of writing a great poem, and the idea was abandoned.

<sup>1</sup> "*Disce ut semper victurus vive, ut cras moriturus*," of which he has given so admirable a translation, became the motto of Dr. Fiske's life, and was graven above the hearth in his library at "Westgate," in Cambridge.

Milton's father had retired from business and was living in plain rural comfort in the pretty village of Horton, within sight of the towers of Windsor Castle, and about two hours ride on horseback from London. It was near enough to allow going into the city to hear music or to spend an evening at the theatre. In Horton, the young poet lived at his father's house for nearly six delightful years of study and meditation. He pushed on his studies in Hebrew, including Rabbinical literature as well as the Bible; and to all this he added a knowledge of Syriac. With Greek literature his acquaintance was minute and thorough, and he seems to have written Greek fluently. But his mastery of Latin was such as has rarely been equalled. He not only wrote it, whether prose or verse, with the same facility as English, but his command of the language was such as few of the Roman authors themselves had attained. His Latin style has not, indeed, the elegant perfection of Cicero and Virgil; it tolerates, or rather rejoices, in phrases which those writers would have deemed barbarous; but this does not come from carelessness or lack of knowledge, it is done on purpose. Milton was so much at home in Latin that he would play with it just as James Russell Lowell delighted in playing with English. It was none of your dead-and-alive schoolmaster's Latin, but a fresh and flowing diction, full of pith and pungency.

During the quiet years at Horton, the chief studies of Milton were in the history and literature of Italy. Of English and French literature down to his own time, he had compassed pretty much all that was accessible and worth knowing,—a much easier achievement in those days than it would be now,




after these two added centuries of printing. To Greek history, from early times to the fall of Constantinople, he also gave much attention.

It was at Horton that Milton's first great poems were written. More or less meritorious verse in Greek, Latin, and English he had written at Cambridge; and in the Christmas hymn, written in his twenty-first year, —

“ It was the winter wild,  
While the heaven-born child  
All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies,”

there are some stanzas of magnificent promise. But his first important work was “Comus,” a mask performed at Ludlow Castle in 1634. The mask was a kind of dramatic entertainment, in which scenery and gorgeous costumes formed a setting for dialogue alternating with music. It was fashionable in England from the time of Edward III. to the time of Charles I. Some of the finest specimens of the mask were written by Ben Jonson, who was still living in 1634. With further development the mask would probably have become opera, but its career was suddenly cut short by Puritanism. “Comus” seems to have been the last one that was performed. The eminent composer, Henry Lawes, had undertaken to furnish music for a mask; he asked his friend Milton to write the words, and the result was “Comus,” a piece of poetry more exquisite than had ever before been written in England save by Shakespeare. There is an ethereal delicacy about it that reminds one of the quality of mind shown in such plays as the “Tempest” and the “Midsummer Night's Dream.” The late Mark Patti-





son has observed that "it was a strange caprice of fortune that made the future poet of the Puritan epic the last composer of a Cavalier mask." But in truth, while Milton was a typical Puritan for earnestness and strength of purpose, he was far from sharing the bigoted and narrow whims of Puritanism. He had no sympathy whatever with the spirit that condemned the theatre and tore the organs out of churches and defaced noble works of art and frowned upon the love of beauty as a device of Satan. He was independent even of Puritan fashions, as is shown by his always wearing his long, auburn locks when a cropped head was one of the distinguishing marks of a Puritan. With the same proud independence he approved the drama and kept up his passion for music. In his seriousness there was no sourness. A lover of truth and righteousness, he also worshipped the beautiful. In his mind there was no antagonism between art and religion, — art was part of religion; the artist, like the saint, was inspired by God's grace. Listen to what he says of the power of poetic creation, "This is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the life of whom He pleases." There is the Puritan doctrine of grace applied in a manner which few Puritans would have thought of.

The blithe and sunny temper of Milton is illustrated in the two exquisite little poems with Italian titles he wrote while at Horton, — "L'Allegro" or "The Cheerful Man," and "Il Penseroso" or "The Thoughtful Man." In them the delicious life he was

living in the soft English country finds expression. Nothing more beautiful has come from human pen. In the first one, the poet addresses the fair goddess of Mirth, "so buxom, blithe, and debonair." In her company he fain would dwell,

"In unreprieved pleasures free ;  
To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise.

\* \* \* \*

While the cock with lively din  
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,  
And to the stack, or the barn door,  
Stoutly struts his dames before."

In the bright morning thus ushered in, our poet would go forth on his walk,

"By hedge row elms on hillocks green,

\* \* \* \*

While the ploughman near at hand  
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,  
And the mower whets his scythe,  
And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale."

As he goes on his way a series of exquisite, home-like landscape pictures, such as can be seen nowhere else in such perfection as in England, greets his eye.

"Russet lawns and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,  
Mountains on whose barren breast  
The labouring clouds do often rest ;  
Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.

Towers and battlements it sees,  
 Bosomed high in tufted trees.

• • • •

Hard by a cottage chimney smokes  
 From betwixt two aged oaks,  
 Where Corydon and Thyrsis met  
 Are at their savoury dinner set  
 Of herbs and other country messes  
 Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses."

After the day and evening, with their innocent pleasures, have received due mention, the visit to London is not forgotten.

"Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
 If Jonson's learned sock be on,  
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,  
 Warble his native woodnotes wild ;  
 And ever against eating cares  
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
 Married to immortal verse. . . ."

And so on to the final invocation.

"These delights, if thou canst give,  
 Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

Nothing could be further from the conventionalism, as remembered in New England, than in which these verses were conceived. In companion address to Melancholy, wherein deeper soul finds expression, we have all the earnestness of the Puritan, without the slightest attempt to suppress or hide the worship of the beautiful. The opening line:—

"Hence, vain deluding joys,"

we seem to hear a hurried sweep of stringed instruments, till all at once enters the solemn note of the organ : —

“Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure,  
All in a robe of darkest grain,  
Flowing with majestic train.”

The passage is too long for quotation ; we must pass to the evening picture,

“Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,  
Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the cricket on the hearth,  
Or the bellman’s drowsy charm,  
To bless the doors from nightly harm.”

Then in silent meditation the scholar recalls the teachings of Plato, and seeks to imagine what may betide man’s immortal soul when all that is earthly shall have passed away. He peers into the secrets of science, but is not forgetful of the varied drama of human life.

“Some time let gorgeous Tragedy  
In sceptred pall come sweeping by.”

With epic and legend and all the storied lore of the Middle Ages and the Orient, the night passes and the morning comes with soft showers.

“And when the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me Goddess bring  
To arched walks of twilight groves,

• • • • •




Where the rude axe with heavied stroke  
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.  
There in close covert by some brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look,  
Hide me from Day's garish eye,  
While the bee with honeyed thigh,  
That at her flowery work doth sing,  
And the waters murmuring  
With such consort as they keep,  
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep."

Best known of all the passages in this pair of poems is that in which the poet repairs from the brookside to the studious cloister, with reminiscences of Cambridge and that glorious chapel with its "high embowed roof" and "storied windows," its "pealing organs" and "full-voiced choir," whence the thought is carried on to the hermitage with its mossy cell, where the story ends as it started with the delights of science:—

"Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heaven doth shew,  
And every herb that sips the dew ;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like poetic strain.  
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,  
And I with thee will choose to live."

These twin poems belong to the class of pastorals such as were written by Theocritus and Virgil. A third poem, of similar construction, written at Horton in 1637, has ever since been recognized as the most perfect specimen in existence of that kind of poetry. The framework of "Lycidas" is purely conventional; no one but a scholar steeped to the marrow of his bones



in ancient literature could have worked under such conditions without losing something of the freedom and freshness of his thought. The pastoral form was admirably adapted to Milton's purpose; in that completely artificial and impossible world of shepherds and shepherdesses, nymphs and fauns, it was easy to keep the utterance of strong emotion subservient to the supreme artistic end of beauty for its own sake. Things could be said, too, which, if explicitly said of certain persons living in England in 1637, would not be endured. The occasion of the poem was the death of Edward King, a young clergyman who had been Milton's friend and fellow-student at Cambridge. Mr. King was drowned in a shipwreck on the Irish Sea, in crossing from Chester to Dublin; and his sorrowing friends in Cambridge made up an album of thirty-six original poems in Greek, Latin, and English, to be printed as a memorial volume. Most of the poems were of the crude, trashy sort usually found in such collections. One of them exclaims:—


“To drown this little world! Could God forget  
His covenant which in the clouds he set?  
Where was the bow?—but back, my Muse, from hence,  
'Tis not for thee to question Providence,” etc.

Another says:—

“Religion was but the position  
Of his own judgment: Truth to him alone  
Stood naked; he strung the Art's chain and knit the ends,  
And made divine and human learning friends,” etc.

A third says:—

“Weep forth your tears, then; pour out all your tide;  
All waters are pernicious since King died.”



Another, with somewhat more poetic touch, refers to sunset : —

“So did thy light, fair soul, itself withdraw  
To no dark tomb by nature’s common law,  
But set in waves.”

After the rabble of versifiers let us now hear the poet. We may observe that the impersonation of Mr. King as the shepherd, Lycidas, while suggested by Greek conventional forms, is in fortunate harmony with the familiar Biblical comparison of the clergyman to the shepherd watching over his flock. How noble is the music of the well-known opening lines : —

“Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.”

The sad occasion is the death of young Lycidas, the poet’s fellow-swain : —

“For we were nurst upon the selfsame hill,  
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.  
Together, both, ere the high lawns appeared,  
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,  
We drove afield,”

and so proceeds the charming description until the first change of theme : —

“But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone and never must return !  
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o’ergrown,  
And all the echoes mourn.

The willows and the hazel copses green  
Shall now no more be seen  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.  
As killing as the canker to the rose,  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear,  
When first the white thorn blows,  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear."

There follow the invocation to the nymphs, the sublime passage on Fame, "that last infirmity of noble minds," and then the shadow procession of figures that come as mourners, — the herald of Neptune, the tutelar deity of the river Cam, and lastly "the pilot of the Galilean lake," St. Peter with his massy keys, who,

" . . . shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake : —  
How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
Enough of such as for their bellies' sake  
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold !"

In the terrible invective thus introduced we read the doom of Archbishop Laud and his policy, until, in the concluding lines, which have greatly puzzled commentators, we seem to see the herdsman with his black mask and hear the dreadful thud of the two-handed broadaxe. In the unreal atmosphere of the pastoral eclogue, such denunciation might be indulged, even in an age when men were sent to jail for their printed words.

From this furnace blast of indignation the change is magical to the wondrously beautiful call for the flowers : —

" Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,  
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,



The white pink and the pansy freaked with jet,  
 The glowing violet,  
 The musk rose and the well-attired woodbine,  
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears :  
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
 And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,  
 To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies."

Soon after this invocation, which has in it nothing to which an ancient Greek like Theocritus might not have responded with full sympathy, the mood once more changes, and the triumphant hope of the Christian finds voice in the following sublime passage. We shall encounter in the course of it a word of which the meaning has utterly changed in the last two centuries; Milton says "unexpressive" where we should say "inexpressible" or "beyond expression."

"Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,  
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore,  
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky ;  
 So Lycidas, sunk low but mounted high,  
 Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,  
 Where, other groves and other streams along,  
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,  
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song  
 In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
 There entertain him all the saints above,  
 In solemn troops and sweet societies,  
 That sing and singing in their glory move,  
 And wipe the tears forever from his eyes."

From this magnificent organ peal of triumph, the very next line suddenly changes to a thought that is purely

and emphatically pagan; yet so consummate is the skill with which the varying modes of the poem have been marshalled that there is nothing abrupt or shocking in the change, but our minds follow in entire acquiescence:—

“Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;  
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore  
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood.”

The next line shows that this change from the Christian to the pagan mood was needed in order to introduce properly the exquisite scene that concludes the poem:—

“Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
While the still morn went out with sandals gray,  
He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:  
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,  
And now was dropt into the western bay.  
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue,  
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

It was more than twenty years before the promise of the last line was fulfilled. Not until 1658 did Milton turn to fresh woods and pastures new, when he began to work steadily at “Paradise Lost.” In that long interval he wrote no poetry save a few sonnets and an occasional psalm. In the complete edition of Milton’s works, the best edition, published by Pickering, in 1851, the poems are all contained in two volumes, while the prose works fill six volumes. Let us see how so many works came to be written in prose.

In 1638, still pursuing his studies toward the writing of a great poem, Milton started for a journey on

the Continent. He was now in his thirtieth year, and apparently had never earned a penny. By the few people of discernment he was already recognized as one of the foremost scholars in Europe and a poet of the rarest sort. His broad-minded father approved his plans, and cheerfully incurred the expense of this journey, which might last several years, at an average yearly cost of what in modern money might be called \$1000. Milton's fifteen months upon the Continent were chiefly spent in Italy, where he was everywhere received with distinguished respect and courtesy. The incident which made the deepest impression upon him was a visit to the aged and blind Galileo at his villa near Florence. In "Paradise Lost" there are two allusions to the great astronomer, one in Book V. 262:—

"As when by night the glass  
 . Of Galileo . . . observes  
 Imagined lands and regions in the moon ;"

the other in Book I. 287:—

"Like the moon, whose orb  
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
 At evening from the top of Fesole,  
 Or in Valdorno, to descry new lands,  
 Rivers and mountains in her spotty globe."


While in Italy, Milton wrote several charming sonnets in Italian, all addressed to a lady, perhaps one and the same lady, the object of some passing fancy. At Naples he was entertained by the Marquis Manso, who had formerly given shelter to the poet Tasso, and talked much to Milton about him. There he received news from England which led him to abandon his in-

tention of visiting Greece, and turn homeward. The day of reckoning, which he had foretold in "Lycidas," was at hand. Civil war was coming, and he felt that his country needed him. The date of his return home is fixed by that of his halt at Geneva. An Italian nobleman, driven from home for heresy, was living in the Swiss city, and the ladies of his family kept an album of autographs, in which, on June 10, 1639, Milton wrote his name with the sentiment from "Comus":

**"If Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her."**

In recent times this album came into the possession of Charles Sumner, and it may now be seen at Harvard College Library. It contains also the autograph of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.

The mention of this name brings us to the work which began to absorb Milton's time and strength soon after his return to England. We have not time enough for many details of it, nor is it worth our while to follow the poet in his various changes of domicile. The days in the earthly paradise of Horton were over, and he was to dwell henceforth in London, and fight for his ideal of liberty and good government. Soon after the opening of the Long Parliament, his interest in Church reforms led him to begin writing those remarkable political pamphlets in which he did such valiant service to the Puritan party. In the first series of such pamphlets, published in 1641, he attacked what he called "Prelacy," or the undue authority of priests and bishops. Opposed to the tyrannical policy of Archbishop Laud were two parties, one of moderate reformers, the other of Root-and-Branch



men, as they were called, men who would have transformed the Episcopal Church into a Presbyterian. Many of these soon passed on farther, and became Congregationalists or Independents. It was not doctrinal questions that divided parties, it was not an affair of theology, but of ecclesiastical politics; republicanism was opposed to monarchy, alike in Church and in State; Milton was from the first moment a Root-and-Branch man, his views were set forth with keen logic, invincible learning, and impassioned eloquence; his pamphlets were read far and wide; he became a marked man, and the object of savage attacks.

Curiously enough, the next series of Milton's pamphlets related to the subject of divorce, and were suggested by domestic difficulties of his own. A few miles from Oxford there lived one Richard Powell, a gentleman of good family and one of the county magistrates, a High Churchman withal and a stanch Cavalier. He had a large family of children and kept open house, and thither the Puritan poet turned his steps in May, 1643. Whether he went to talk about a debt of £500, which Mr. Powell had owed his father for sixteen years, or what other reason might have drawn him to that nest of royalists, does not appear. But when he returned to London in June, strange to tell, it was with one of the daughters, Mary Powell, as his bride. She was only seventeen, and as light-headed as Dora Copperfield. There was a brief frolic of cousins and bridesmaids, and then, when all had gone and the young girl was left alone in the society of this mighty thinker and scholar, more than twice her age, the sombre colour of such life soon came to

be more than she could endure, and in August she begged leave to go back to mamma and stay till the end of September. The leave was kindly granted, but when the time came she did not return. Milton sent letter after letter, but there was no answer. After some weeks he sent a messenger, who was dismissed with rude words.

Practically this might be interpreted as desertion, and in many places to-day would be judged fit ground for divorce. It was not so in England in Milton's time, and it led him to publish pamphlets advocating more freedom of divorce than then existed. He made no mention of his own trouble, but to us who read the knowledge of it lights up what he says. Probably he would have made efforts to obtain a divorce, but the lapse of two years wrought a change. In June, 1645, the battle of Naseby overthrew the king's party, and among other consequences the home of the Powells was seized and the family turned out of doors. Milton, too, became all at once a man of power, whose favour was worth seeking. Some friends conspired together and hid poor little Mary in a house in London, whither Milton was known to be coming at a certain hour. At the sound of his voice in the next room she rushed in upon him, threw herself at his feet, and begged to be forgiven. It was all her mother's fault, she said. The poet's great heart asked for no explanation; it was enough for her to come back now, the past need never be mentioned. To crown his generosity he even took that froward mother-in-law into his house, and thenceforth had pretty much the whole Powell family on his hands for some years. In 1652 Mary Milton died, leaving three daughters, who all lived to

grow up. From his return to England until 1646 Milton had earned money by teaching private pupils; in 1646 the death of his father, whom he tenderly loved, left him a comfortable fortune.

In 1649, after the execution of the king, Milton accepted the post of Latin Secretary to the government of the Commonwealth, and in that position he remained until after the death of Cromwell. His duties were chiefly translating despatches and writing Latin letters, but he was incidentally called upon for much more than this. A royalist book appeared, entitled "Eikon Basilike," or the "Royal Image"; it purported to have been written by the late king, and its object was to stimulate the sentiment which had been shocked by his execution. In its pages Charles I. appears as a saint and martyr, and some of its tearful readers blasphemously likened him to Jesus Christ. The book went through forty-seven editions. It was written by a Dr. Gauden, whom Charles II. afterward rewarded with a bishopric; but everybody, save the half-dozen who knew the secret, believed it to be the work of Charles I. So thought Milton himself when he demolished it in his pamphlet entitled "Eikonoklastes," or the "Image Breaker," the tone of which may be inferred from a motto on the title-page, "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people" (Prov. xxviii. 15).

Dr. Gauden's book, being in English, could not reach many readers on the Continent, and young Charles, who was then living in Holland, intrusted the defence of his father to the celebrated Salmasius, professor at Leyden, generally regarded as the best Latinist in Europe. The book of Salmasius, called

a "Defence of the King," was answered by Milton's Latin treatise, called a "Defence of the English People," which was probably read by every educated man and woman in every corner of Europe. It was a defence of the people for executing their king for treason. The question is one on which conflicting views are still maintained; but the number of those who would hold the king guiltless and call him a martyr has greatly diminished and is still diminishing, since we know that he was capable of allying himself with any party whatever for the sake of his personal ends. In these days we find no difficulty in realizing that a king who uses military force to overthrow the constitutional liberties of the people is guilty of treason and amenable to its consequences. The chief criticism now brought against the execution of Charles I. is that it instantly gave his son a claim to the throne and thus created further disturbance. Cromwell and his party were not ignorant of this danger, but they had to choose between it and the other danger of making further compacts with a king upon whose plighted word no man could for a moment rely. They believed that the latter danger was the greater, and they slew the king, not in vindictiveness, but as a measure of public safety. In Milton's book, however, we catch yet another note, a stern and grim one: let it be a warning to tyrants all over the world. One can fancy the shiver with which royalists everywhere must have read such startling doctrines.

Milton's love and admiration for the mighty Oliver were never shaken. The two men were much alike for downright honesty and unsullied patriotism, also for breadth of mind and disdain of petty considera-



tions. Their ideas of toleration and absolute freedom were immeasurably above the level of contemporary Puritan opinion. The greatest of Milton's prose works is his "Areopagitica," a defence of freedom of speech and of the press. It is one of the immortal glories of English literature.


In leaving with this scanty mention the subject of Milton's prose writings, a word must be said of his style. It is the prose of a poet, impassioned and gorgeous, often stiff and heavy with ornament, like cloth of gold. In his time the virtue of conciseness had not been learned. Milton's sentences are apt to be so long and cumbrous as to tax the attention. The command of words is well-nigh unequalled. Urbanity is often conspicuously absent. It was a great crisis of humanity in which the combatants paid small heed to politeness. Epithets were hurled at Milton like showers of barbed arrows, and his retorts were quick and deadly. Stateliness never deserted him, but, as with George Washington, the white heat of his wrath was such as to make strong men tremble. Pattison somewhere says that in his passionate eloquence the English and Latin sentences creak like the timbers of a ship in a storm.

At that time Milton wrote no poetry save now and then some grand sonnets, among which those of Vane and Cromwell, and on the Massacre of Piedmont, are among the finest. The year 1658, his fiftieth year, was a sad one in the poet's life. His second wife, to whom he had been married little more than a year, suddenly died. Soon afterward died Cromwell, and with him Milton's dreams for the immediate future of England. For a long time Milton's sight had been

defective. Blindness had come on in his forty-fourth year, and it was now confessed to be incurable. The appearance of his eyes had not changed, but all sight was gone. He was then beginning to work steadily upon "Paradise Lost."

In two years more came Charles II., and then the headsman's axe was busy. Milton had to hide for his life, but was arrested and kept for several weeks in prison. While there, he could hear the dismal story of friends and companions beheaded and quartered. In that cruel time how did the man escape who had been the mouthpiece of the rebel government? When even the lifeless body of Cromwell was taken from the grave and hung on the gallows at Tyburn, what mercy could be hoped for the man who defended the regicides before all Europe? Professor Masson tells in detail how skilfully the affair was managed, when the least slip would have sent Milton to the scaffold. My own impression is that Clarendon, himself a scholar and historian, could not quite bear to see England's greatest scholar put to a shocking death. But if Milton had not been blind and helpless, I doubt if anything would have saved him from the fate of Sir Henry Vane.

After his release Milton lived the remaining fourteen years of his life in London. His third wife, to whom he was married in 1663, survived him for many years. Their life seems to have been happy. The blind man needed constant help in his literary work. Sometimes young men would gladly come and serve as readers and scribes for the sake of his society and talk; sometimes his grown-up daughters were pressed into the work. The eldest went scot-free because she stammered; but Mary and Dorothy were taught the Greek



and Hebrew letters, and had to read aloud by the hour from books of which they understood not a word. Dorothy always spoke of him with warm affection, but Mary was once heard to wish he was dead.

The Puritan poet felt that he had fallen on evil days. He could not see, as we do, that the good in Cromwell's work was really permanent, and that the impulse given by Puritanism was never to die. In the vile reign of Charles II., it must have seemed as if all virtue were dethroned and the sons of Belial let loose upon the earth. There is a tone of sadness, though not of sourness, about Milton's last years. He was never sullen or fretful. Macaulay is right in speaking of his "majestic patience." But I do not see what Macaulay could have been thinking of when he wrote of Milton as "retiring to his hovel to die." He had lost heavily by investing money in Commonwealth securities, which the Stuart government naturally refused to redeem. His condition thenceforth, says Masson, was not one of poverty but of "frugal gentility." The house in which he lived for twelve years and in which he died was by no means a hovel, and on the income from his property, such as it was, he maintained his family. Part of the furniture of the house was a good organ, and on it the blind man would play by the hour together, while the verses of "Paradise Lost" were taking shape in his mind. That great poem, with its successors, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes," were written in that house; and thither came visitors from all parts of Europe, as to a sacred shrine. He who had so long been known as scholar and charming poet lived long enough to find men ranking him among the foremost poets of all time. His latter days were molested by

gout, which at length proved fatal. On a Sunday night in November, 1674, he passed away so quietly that his friends in the room did not know when he died.

"Paradise Lost," like Dante's great poem, the only one with which it can be compared, was the outcome of many years of meditation. As a young man Milton thought of writing an epic poem, and he took much time in selecting a subject. For a while the legends of King Arthur attracted him, as they have fascinated Tennyson and so many other poets. In the course of his studies of early British history and legend, he was led to write a "History of England," to the year 1066, in one volume. After a while he abandoned this idea. The subject of an epic poem must be one of wide interest. Homer and Virgil dealt with the legendary beginnings of national history. If a national subject, like the Arthur legends, were not adopted, something of equal or wider interest must be preferred; and the choice of the Puritan poet naturally fell upon the story of the "Creation and Fall of Man." The range of such a subject was limited only by that of the poet's own vast stores of knowledge. No theme could be loftier, none could afford greater scope for gorgeous description, none could sound the depths of human experience more deeply, none could appeal more directly to the common intelligence of all readers in Christendom. Of all these advantages Milton made the most, and "Paradise Lost" has been the epic of the Christian world, the household book in many a family and many a land where Puritanism has not otherwise been honoured. As Huxley once remarked, the popular theory of creation, which Lyell and Darwin

overthrew, was founded more upon "Paradise Lost" than upon the Bible.

There is a tradition that Milton preferred his "Paradise Regained" to "Paradise Lost." The poem is much less generally read. Its main theme is the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, and it affords no such scope for picturesqueness as its predecessor. Its greatness consists in the sustained loftiness of the thought and the organ-like music of the verse. There is a Greek severity and simplicity about it, as also in the drama of the blind Samson, the last mighty work of the Puritan poet.

A treatise of Milton's on Christian doctrine, which did not get published till 1825, confirmed the suspicion which some shrewd readers of "Paradise Lost" had entertained, that the poet's own theology, like that of Locke and Newton, was Unitarian. In this, as in some other ways, he was far from being in touch with the Puritans of his time.

In the spiritual life of modern times there have been two great uplifting tendencies, one derived from the Bible, the other from the study of Greek. The former tendency produced the Protestant Reformation, the latter produced what we call the Renaissance or New Birth of art and science. The spirit of the Reformation animated the Puritans as a class. But Milton was as much a child of the Renaissance as of the Reformation; there was in him as much of the Greek as of the Hebrew. The limits of Puritanism were too narrow for him.

By common consent of educated mankind three poets — Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare — stand above all others. For the fourth place there are com-

petitors: two Greeks, *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*; two Romans, *Lucretius* and *Virgil*; one German, *Goethe*. In this high company belongs *John Milton*, and there are many who would rank him first after the unequalled three.



### III

## THE FALL OF NEW FRANCE





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To any one looking superficially at a map of North America in the year 1755, it might well have seemed that, of the three great nations which had competed for the possession of the continent, the foremost position had been firmly secured by France. Certainly in geographical extent the French domain held the first place. From the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, and northward to Hudson Bay, stretched the French province of Canada. From Lake Champlain slanting through central New York to where Pittsburg now stands, then following the Alleghanies down to eastern Tennessee, and slanting again in a somewhat arbitrary line to Mobile Bay, ran the eastern boundary of French Louisiana. The western limits of this huge province were ill defined, but they extended in theory to the sources of the Missouri; and in a north and south line Louisiana comprehended everything from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico. Nor was the control of France over this territory merely nominal, at least so far as the portion east of the Mississippi is concerned. Though the settlements of the French were but few and far between, they were placed with admirable skill, both for commercial and for strategic purposes. Each settlement, besides forming the nucleus of a lucrative trade, was a strong military centre from which the allegiance of surrounding Indian tribes might

be enforced, and at that time the power of the Indians had not yet ceased to be formidable.


In contrast with this immense domain, the strip of English settlements along the Atlantic coast would have seemed quite narrow and insignificant. In New York the frontier was at Johnson Hall, not far from Schenectady; in Pennsylvania it was at Carlisle; farther south the advance from the coast toward the interior had been even less considerable. Moreover, as far as military purposes were concerned, these colonies would seem to have been as badly organized as possible. Divided into thirteen distinct and independent governments, owning a varying and ill-defined allegiance to the British crown, it was next to impossible to secure concerted military action among them. Even in any single colony the raising of troops required so much discussion in the legislature, and so much wrangling over local or sectarian interests, that the assailant was as likely as not to have delivered his blow and got off scot-free before any force was in readiness to thwart or punish him. Besides this, the English colonists were preëminently a peace-loving people, occupied almost entirely with their own domestic affairs; they had as little as possible to do with the Indians, and for the present, at least, had no far-reaching designs upon the interior of the continent: whereas the French, on the other hand, had a perfectly well-defined military policy, and bent all their energies toward maintaining and consolidating the supremacy over the country which they seemed already to have acquired.

Nevertheless, within eight years from the time we have taken for our survey, the French did not possess

a single rood of land in the whole of North America; and except for a few months at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they have never since held any territory here. Moreover, the fall of the French power was at once admitted to be as irretrievable as it was sudden; and since the first fatal catastrophe it has never shown even so much vitality as would have been implied in a serious attempt to recover its lost prestige. The causes of this striking phenomenon are worthy of consideration.

It has often been observed that of all the modern nations which have sought to reproduce and perpetuate their social and political institutions by colonizing the savage regions of the earth, England is the only one which has achieved signal and lasting success. For this remarkable fact various causes may be assigned; but I think we shall find the principal cause to lie in the circumstance that in England alone, among the great European nations, both individual liberty and local self-government have always been preserved; whereas elsewhere—and notably in the France of the Old Régime, with which our comparison is here chiefly concerned—these indispensable elements of national vitality had been, by the seventeenth century, almost completely lost. To understand this point fully, we must go back far into the past, and inquire for a moment into the origin of despotic government.

The great problem of civilization is how to secure sufficient uniformity of belief and action among men without going so far as to destroy variety of belief and action. A world peopled with savages and barbarians like ancient North America is incapable of much



progress, because it is impossible to secure concerted action on a large scale, and so the powers of men are frittered away in labours which tend toward no common result. The initial difficulty in civilizing a savage world is to get a large number of its savages to work together, for generation after generation, in accordance with some general system, for the subjugation of surrounding savages and the establishment of a permanent community. Unless some such long-enduring concert of action can be secured, a settled form of civilization cannot be attained; but the history of such a country—as in the case of ancient North America—will be an endless series of trivial and useless wars. The nations which in early times have become civilized and peaceful have become so through the military superiority which the power of permanently concerted action entails; but this great advantage has generally been attended by a disadvantage. In most of these early civilized nations the forces which tend to make the whole community think and act alike have been so far encouraged that the result has been absolute despotism. Not political and ecclesiastical despotism simply, but underlying these a social despotism which in course of time moulds all the members of the community upon the same model, so that their characters become monotonously alike. The chief types of this kind of civilization are China and ancient Egypt, but all the civilized nations of Asia have been characterized by this sort of despotism. The result, of course, is immobility. When the whole community has come to think and feel and behave in the same way, every expression of dissent, every attempt at innovation, is at once crushed

out; or, rather, such uniformity of belief and behaviour is attained only after all dissent and innovation have been crushed out; and of course in such a community no further progress is possible.


If our principal subject were the philosophy of European history, it would be interesting and profitable to inquire into the circumstances which have enabled the nations of Europe to get over the initial difficulty of civilization and secure the benefits of concerted action without going so far as to crush out variation in belief and conduct. As it is, we must content ourselves with observing that in this sort of compromise has consisted the peculiar progressiveness of European civilization. The different nations of Europe have solved the problem with very different degrees of success,—England and Spain affording the two extreme instances,—but none have quite failed in it like the nations of Asia. There have been despotisms in Europe, but nothing like the despotism of Assyria or Persia. The papacy never quite became a caliphate, though some of the popes may have done their best to make it so. Neither Philip II. nor Louis XIV. was quite a sultan, however it might have tickled their fancy to be thought so.

Nevertheless, the tendency toward Asiatic despotism has asserted itself very strongly at various epochs of European history, usually, perhaps, as the result of prolonged military pressure from without. The tendency increased quite steadily in the Roman Empire from the time of the earliest Germanic invasions until the culmination of the Byzantine era; and the traditions of this despotism were inherited by the Roman Church. In Germany, the operation of the tendency

has been delayed in great part by the same causes which have retarded the unification of the country. In Spain, it had proceeded so far in the sixteenth century as to produce a national torpor, from which the Spaniards have not yet succeeded in arousing themselves. In France, a somewhat similar process went on until, in the eighteenth century, it was checked by the influx of English ideas, which prepared the way for the great Revolution. In England, the tendency toward absolutism was always much weaker than anywhere else, but it was strong enough in the seventeenth century to bring about the migration of Puritans to America, and afterward the great Rebellion, and finally the Revolution of 1688. In these and other instances, however, where it has asserted itself in England, the tendency has been so weak as to be promptly checked. There has never been a time in English history when free thinking on political and religious subjects has been quite suppressed. Of all the great European nations, England alone has succeeded in reaching a high stage of civilization without seriously impairing the political freedom which was once the common possession of the Aryan people by whom Europe was last settled.

The consequences of this have been very great. After the initial difficulties of civilization have once been clearly surmounted, there can be no question that diversity of opinion and variety of character are of the greatest importance for the development of a rich and powerful national life. Other things equal, the foremost place in civilization must inevitably be seized and maintained by the nation which most sedulously cherishes and encourages variety. Such a nation will

be more inventive than others, more prompt to meet sudden emergencies, more buoyant in recovering from calamity; its people will be more easily adaptable to all sorts of climates and situations, more ready to engage in all kinds of activity, more fertile in expedients, and more self-reliant in character. The nation, on the other hand, which systematically seeks to enforce uniformity of disposition among its members — which kills out all nonconformists or drives them beyond its borders — is sure, in proportion to its success, to sink into an inferior position in the world. The establishment of the Inquisition in Spain and the expulsion of the Moriscoes were the two greatest calamities which any nation ever voluntarily inflicted upon itself. The evil wrought by the violent expulsion of the Moriscoes, involving as it did the sudden downfall of several of the principal industries of the country, is plain enough to every student of history. But the deadly Inquisition, working quietly and steadily year after year while fourteen generations lived and died, unquestionably wrought still greater evil. The Inquisition was simply a great machine for winnowing out and destroying all such individuals as surpassed the average of the nation in quickness of wit and in strength of character, so far as to entertain opinions of their own and to be bold enough to declare those opinions. The machine worked with such terrible efficiency that it was next to impossible for such people to escape it. They were strangled and burned by tens of thousands; and as the inevitable result, the average character of the Spanish people has been lowered. The brightest and boldest have been cut off, while the dullest and weakest have been spared





to propagate the race; and accordingly the Spaniard of the nineteenth century is, as compared with his contemporaries, a less intelligent and less enterprising person than the Spaniard of the sixteenth century. In the march of progress this people has fallen behind all the other peoples of Europe, and it is very doubtful whether the damage thus done can ever be repaired. For the competition among nations is so constant and so keen, that when a people has once clearly and unmistakably lost its hold upon the foremost position, it is not very likely to regain it. It is so in the struggle for existence that goes on perpetually between species of plants and brute animals. It is equally so in the case of races of men, and history abounds with examples of it.

In similar wise, by his stupid persecution of the Huguenots, Louis XIV. simply robbed France of a rich and important element in its national life, and what France thus irreparably lost was gained by the Protestant countries of Europe and by the English colonies in America. To Massachusetts, to New York, and to South Carolina, the Huguenot settlers, being picked men, added a strength out of all proportion to their mere numbers, and to England and Germany they did likewise. During the reign of Louis XIV. more than a million Huguenots would seem to have left France, including the three hundred thousand who emigrated immediately after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The whole population of France was then about fourteen millions, so that here was a direct loss of seven per cent of the people of the country. But mere figures can give no idea of the extent of the damage, for the people who left the

kingdom were not thick-headed peasants. They were mostly skilled and quick-witted artisans, — paper-makers, workers in iron, weavers of linen and wool, manufacturers of finest silks and laces. Among them were eloquent preachers and learned writers, and some of the most thoroughly trained soldiers and seamen that France had ever possessed, insomuch that the royal navy was for a time well-nigh paralyzed by their departure. Wherever they went their nimble fingers, quick eyes, and ready wits insured them cordial welcome. But even in this statement we do not realize how greatly France has suffered by losing them. It is a common opinion to-day among English-speaking people that the French character is to some extent wanting in earnestness and sincerity. Generalizations of this sort about national characteristics are apt to be untrustworthy, and one can hardly venture to say confidently how far this opinion about the French people may be true. No higher or nobler individual types of sincerity and earnestness can anywhere be found than some that France can show us, as, for instance, in the statesman Malesherbes and the scholar Littré. And among the common people it is by no means seldom that one meets the earnest, simple-hearted, unselfish goodness of the watchmaker Melchior Goulden in Erckmann-Chatrian's charming story of the Conscript. To charge the French, as a people, with frivolousness and insincerity is to do them gross injustice. Still, at the bottom of the English prejudice there lies, no doubt, a grain of truth. The Huguenot type of character, in its intense earnestness and uncompromising truthfulness, was like the Puritan type. What the Puritan has been to England the Huguenot might

have been to France could he have stayed and thriven there. Had the Puritans been driven from England, we can readily see that the average character of the English people, as regards sincerity and earnestness, would have been inevitably lowered. And it is impossible that France should have lost out of its population so large a portion as seven per cent, selected precisely because of its signal preëminence in earnestness and sincerity, without seriously affecting the average character of the people for many generations to come.

From these examples we may see that the dangers arising from the expulsion of nonconformists are many and profound. The evil consequences of such a policy are innumerable, and they ramify in countless directions. Such a policy had been intermittently pursued in France ever since the Albigensian horrors of the thirteenth century. But in the worst days of English history no such policy has ever prevailed. The acts against the Lollards, and the brief agony in the reign of Mary Tudor, were weak and ineffectual. The burning of heretics began in England in 1401, and ended in 1611. During those two hundred and ten years the total number of persons put to death was about four hundred. Of these executions about three hundred occurred in the years 1555-1557, under Mary Tudor, leaving a total of one hundred for the rest of the two centuries. The contrast to what went on in other countries is startling. No great body of people has ever been violently expelled from England, so that its peculiar type of character has been subtracted from the subsequent life of the nation. On the contrary, ever since the days of the Plantagenets it has been a

maxim of English law — often violated, no doubt, in evil times, but still forever recognized as a guiding principle — that whosoever among the hunted and oppressed of other realms should set his foot on the sacred soil of Britain became forthwith free, and entitled to all the protection that England's strong arm could afford. On that hospitable soil all types of character, all varieties of temperament, all shades of belief, have flourished side by side, and have interacted upon one another until there has been evolved the most plastic, the most energetic, the most self-reliant, the most cosmopolitan race of men that has yet lived on the earth.


These considerations begin to make it apparent why a people like the English, encountering a people like the French in some new part of the world, would naturally overcome or supplant it. Another circumstance implied in the same group of considerations will make this still more apparent. I said just now that the English alone have succeeded in working up to a highly complex form of civilization without essentially departing from the primitive Aryan principle of government. What we may call the "town-meeting principle," with which we are so familiar as the logical basis of our own American political institutions, was essentially the principle on which the early Aryan communities governed themselves. The great puzzle of nation-making has always been how to secure concerted action on a grand scale without sacrificing this principle of local self-government. The political failure of ancient Greece was the failure to secure concerted action on a sufficiently large scale. Rome succeeded in securing concert of action, but in so

doing sacrificed to a great extent the principle of local self-government. The Roman government came to be a close corporation, administering the affairs of the empire through prefects and subprefects; and when we say that the Teutonic invasions infused new life into Roman Europe, I suppose what we chiefly mean is that the Germans reintroduced to some extent the "town-meeting principle," and strengthened the sense of local and personal independence. In England the principle of local self-government became so deeply rooted that it survived the overthrow of the feudal system; but in France — the most thoroughly Romanized country in Europe — it never acquired a very firm foothold, and the overthrow of the feudal system there resulted in government by a close corporation and prefects, not altogether unlike that of the Roman Empire.


Now, it is one characteristic of these highly centralized forms of government by prefects that they are not easily transplanted. They are highly artificial forms of government, in so far as they are the products of very peculiar combinations of circumstances operating for a long while in a particular country. When taken away from the peculiar sets of circumstances in which they have originated, and introduced into a new field, they fall into decay, unless kept up by support from without. There is no natural principle of life within them. On the other hand, the town meeting, or the assembly of heads of families, is, so to speak, the primordial cell out of which the tissue of political life has been originally woven among all races and nations. The civilized government which has learned how to secure concerted action without forsaking this pri-

mordial principle contains an element of permanence which is independent of peculiar local circumstances. Whithersoever transplanted, it will take root and flourish. It has all the reproductive vitality of cellular tissue, whereas the centralized bureaucracy is as rigid and unplastic as cartilage or bone.

The force of these considerations is nowhere better illustrated than in the contrasted fortunes of the French and English settlements in North America. The French colonies, as we have observed, were planted in accordance with a far-reaching imperial policy, and they were favoured by the especial solicitude of the home government, which well understood their value, and was bitterly chagrined when it became necessary to part with them. Louis XIV. in particular, whose long reign covered something like half of the brief history of New France, thought very highly of his American colonies, and laboured industriously to promote their welfare. One of his pet schemes was to reproduce in the New World the political features of French society in Europe, modifying them only so far as it was necessary in order to secure in the New France a bureaucratic despotism even more ideally complete than that which had grown up in the old country. By a reminiscence of vanquished feudalism the land was parcelled out in seigniories, but the management of affairs was in the hands of a viceroy, or governor-general appointed by the king. The instructions of the governor were prepared with extreme prolixity and minuteness by the king and his ministers; and to insure his carrying them out in every particular another officer was appointed, called the *intendant*, whose principal business was to keep an eye on the governor, and




tell tales about him to the minister of state at home. Another part of the intendant's duty was to travel about the colony and pry into the affairs of every household, in order that whatever was wrong might be set right, and the wants of the people provided for. We can imagine the wrath and the hooting which such an official would have provoked in any English colony that ever existed; but in Canada this sort of thing was thought to be quite proper. No enterprise of any sort was undertaken without an appeal to the king for aid. Bounties were attached to all kinds of trades, in order to encourage them, and at the same time it was attempted to prescribe, as far as possible, the exact percentage of profit which might be legally earned. If people got out of work, they were to be supplied with work at the cost of the government. In order to foster a taste for ship-building, the king had ships built at his own expense; yet at the same time the ships which came over from France often went home empty, save those which by royal edict were allowed to carry furs or lumber. In order to encourage the raising of hemp, it was proposed that all hemp grown within the colony should be purchased by the king at a high price. To encourage agriculture in general, the king sent over seeds of all sorts to be distributed among the farmers gratis, while the intendant went about to see that the seeds were duly planted. While native industry was thus sedulously fostered, foreign trade was absolutely prohibited. No mild prohibitory tariff, such as our modern protectionists advocate, was resorted to, but foreign goods were seized wherever found and solemnly burned in the streets. The interests of landed property were also



looked after. As it is inconvenient that farms should be too small, no one living in the open country was to build a house on any piece of land less than a certain prescribed size, under penalty of seeing his house torn down at the next visit of the intendant. That the morals of these favoured farmers might remain uncorrupted by the splendid vices of great cities, they were forbidden to go to Quebec without permission from the intendant, and any one in the city who should let rooms to them was to be fined a hundred livres, for the benefit of the hospitals. In 1710 the inhabitants of Montreal were prohibited from owning more than two horses or mares, and one foal apiece, on the ground that if they raised too many horses they would not raise enough cattle and sheep!

With a thousand such arbitrary and foolish, though well-meant, regulations the people of Canada were hampered and restricted, so that, in spite of the natural advantages of the country for agriculture, for fisheries, and for the fur trade, there was nothing surprising in the facts that business of every kind languished and that the population increased but slowly. The slowness of increase of the population early attracted the attention of the French government, which laboured earnestly to counteract the evil. No inhabitant of Canada was allowed to visit the English colonies or to come home to France without express permission. Emigrants for Canada were diligently enlisted in France, and sent over in ship-loads every year, being paid bounties for going. Women were sent over in companies of two or three hundred at a time, all carefully sorted and selected as to social position, so that nobles, officers, bourgeois, and peasants might each





find wives to suit them ; and each of these prospective brides brought with her a dowry paid by the benevolent king. The arrival of these women was generally preceded or accompanied by a royal order that all bachelors in the colony must get married within two weeks, under penalty of not being allowed to hunt, or catch fish, or trade with the Indians. Every father of a family who had unmarried sons over twenty years of age, or unmarried daughters over sixteen, was subject to a fine unless he could show good cause for his delinquency. The father of ten children received a pension of three hundred livres a year for the rest of his life, while he who had twelve received four hundred, and people in the upper ranks of society who had fifteen children were rewarded with twelve hundred livres. Yet, in spite of all these elaborate devices, the white population of Canada, at the end of the reign of Louis XIV., in 1715, and more than a century after the founding of the colony, did not reach a total of twenty-five thousand.

However absurd such a system of administration may seem to us, it was, after all, only the unflinching application of a theory of protective government which has had very wide currency in the world, and has found too many defenders even in our own self-governing community. The contemporary administration of affairs in France was characterized by many similar errors, and was followed, indeed, in the course of another century, by a terrible spasm of financial ruin and social anarchy. Yet there is one important difference between the results of paternal government administered by a centralized bureaucracy in the country where it has grown up and in the country to which

it is transplanted. In the native country of the bureaucracy a great many of the affairs of life are conducted in accordance with usages established by immemorial custom. Such usages have a certain presumption in their favour, as adapted in some degree to the circumstances of the country; the bureaucracy must be to some extent checked or guided by them, and its capacity for mischief is so far limited. But when the same system of government is transplanted to a new country, its course of procedure is largely a matter of experiment in pursuance of some general or *a priori* theory; and experiments of this sort have always failed. No government that has ever yet existed has possessed enough wisdom to found a prosperous society by any amount of arbitrary administration. When, therefore, the forms and machinery of a centralized despotism are sought to be reproduced away from their connections with the peculiar local traditions amid which they have grown up, it is but the dead husk that is transplanted instead of the living kernel.

While the French colonies in America thus throve so feebly in spite of the anxious care of their sovereign, the English colonies, neglected and left to themselves, were full of sturdy life. The settlers had been accustomed to manage their own affairs at home, instead of having them managed by prefects and intendants. Had their king attempted to deal with them as the benevolent Louis XIV. dealt with his subjects, they would have cut off his head or driven him into exile. In America they conducted themselves very much as they would have done in England, save that they were much freer from interference. Having gone into voluntary exile themselves, they were relieved from the


necessity of beheading the king or driving him into exile, and all they asked was to be let alone. To sundry general commercial restrictions they submitted, especially so long as these restrictions were not enforced, but in all important details each community managed its own affairs according to its own ideas of its own interests.

In ecclesiastical policy the difference between the two peoples was as great as in their political and social life. Religion and the Church occupy as prominent a position in the history of Canada as in that of New England. There are few more heroic chapters in the annals of the Catholic Church than that which recounts the labours and the martyrdom of the Jesuits in North America. Already, before the death of Champlain, the Jesuits had acquired full control of the spiritual affairs of Canada. Their policy aimed at nothing less than the consolidation of the aboriginal tribes into a Christian state under the direct control of the followers of Loyola; and upon this hopelessly impracticable task they entered with an enthusiasm worthy of the noblest of the old crusaders. The character of Maisonneuve claims a place in our affectionate remembrance by the side of Tancred and Godfrey de Bouillon. The charming chronicler Lejeune might be mated with the Sieur de Joinville. Nor was St. Louis himself inspired with a grander fervour than the black-robed priests of the Huron mission. The indomitable Brébeuf, the delicate Lallemant, the long-suffering Jogues, may be ranked with the ancient martyrs of Christianity, and in their heroic lives and deaths the system of Loyola appeared in its brightest and purest light. Though thrown away upon the

Indians, the work of the Jesuits was, after all, the one feature of Canadian polity which possessed sufficient merit to survive the British conquest. Their policy, nevertheless, involved the rigorous exclusion of all freedom of thought from the limits of the colony. No Huguenot was allowed to enter upon any terms. On the other hand, if we consider the Puritans alone, and recollect their treatment of the Quakers in Massachusetts and the Catholics in Maryland, we shall regard their conduct as hardly more politic or commendable than that of the Jesuits. But, if we consider the English colonies all together, the variety of opinion on religious questions was very great; so great that when they came to constitute themselves into a united nation, the only common ground upon which they could possibly meet in ecclesiastical matters was one of unqualified toleration. The heretic in whose face Canada coldly shut the door might be sure of a welcome in one part of English America if not in another.

With all these advantages in their favour, we need not be surprised at the solid and rapid increase of the English colonies. Yet the increase was surprising when compared with anything the world had ever seen before. We do not read that the king of England ever set bounties on large families, or provided wives for the settlers at his own expense. Yet by the year 1750 — less than a century and a half from the settlement of Jamestown — the white population of the thirteen colonies had reached a million and a quarter.

The contrast, therefore, with which we opened this chapter was but a superficial one. Great as were the



territorial acquisitions of the French, their actual strength was by no means in proportion, and their project of confining the English behind the Alleghanies was as chimerical as would have been an attempt to stop the flow of the St. Lawrence.

In carrying out their grand project the French relied largely upon their alliances with the Indians, and for this there was some show of reason. As a general thing the French were far more successful than the English in winning the favour of the savages. They treated them with a firmness and tact very different from the disdainful coldness of the English. They humoured and cajoled them, even while inspiring them with wholesome terror. The haughty and fiery Frontenac, most punctilious of courtiers, with the bluest blood of France flowing in his veins, at the age of seventy did not think it beneath his dignity to smear his cheeks with vermilion and caper madly about in the war-dance, brandishing a tomahawk over his head and yelling like a screech-owl or a cougar. Imagine Governor Winthrop or Governor Endicott acting such a part as this! On the other hand, if an Indian was arrested for murdering a Frenchman, he was hanged in a trice by martial law, and such summary justice the Indians feared and respected. But when an Indian was arrested for murdering an Englishman, he was put upon his trial, with all the safeguards of the English criminal law, and such conscientious clemency the Indians despised as sentimental weakness. Captain Écuyer—a Frenchman in the English service at the time of Pontiac's war—gave an excellent illustration of the Frenchman's native tact in dealing with his red brother. Ecuyer was in command of Fort Pitt—where

Pittsburg now stands — and an attacking force of Delawares summoned him to surrender, with sugared words, assuring him that if he would retreat to Carlisle, they would protect him from some bad Indians in the neighbourhood who thirsted for his blood ; but if he stayed, they would not be responsible for the consequences. Écuyer thanked them for their truly disinterested advice, but assured them that he did not care a rush for the bad Indians, and meant to remain where he was ; but, he added, “an army of six thousand pale-faces is now on the way hither, and another of three thousand has just gone up the lakes to annihilate Pontiac, so you had better be off. I have told you this in acknowledgment of your friendly counsels to me ; but don’t whisper it to those bad Indians, for fear they should run away from our deadly vengeance !” This story of the English armies was, of course, a lie of the first magnitude. The poor fellow had but a handful of men wherewith to repel his swarm of assailants, and he knew very well that any reënforcement was rather to be longed for than expected. But his adroit lie sent the savages away in a panic without further provoking their wrath, and so was worth much more than a successful battle.


Skilful as the French usually were in their dealings with the savages, their position in the country was nevertheless such that at an early period they were brought into conflict with the most warlike of all the Indian tribes, and this circumstance interfered materially with the success of the Canadian colony. In the seventeenth century the country east of the Mississippi, from the line of Tennessee and the Carolinas northward to Hudson Bay, was occupied by two families or races

of Indians, differing radically from each other in their speech, and slightly in their physical characteristics. These were called by the French the Algonquin and Iroquois families. Our old New England acquaintances — the Pequods, Narragansetts, Mohegans, and Abenakis — were all Algonquins. The Delawares, who lived in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, were also Algonquins. So were the Shawnees of the Ohio, the Miamis of the Wabash, the Illinois, the Kickapoos of southern Wisconsin, the Pottawatomies and Ojibwas of Michigan, and the Ottawas of Michigan and Upper Canada. Lower Canada and Acadia were also inhabited by Algonquin tribes. In the central portion of this vast country, surrounded on every side by Algonquins, dwelt the Iroquois. The so-called Five Nations occupied the central portion of New York; to the south of them were the Andastes or Susquehannocks; the Eries lived on the southern shore of the lake which bears their name; and the northern shore was occupied by a tribe known as the Neutral Nation. To the north of these came the Hurons. One Iroquois tribe — the Tuscaroras — lay quite apart from the rest, in North Carolina; but in 1715 this tribe migrated to New York, and joined the famous Iroquois league, which was henceforth known as the Six Nations. The Indians south of the Tennessee and Carolina line, such as the Creeks, Cherokees, Seminoles, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, belong to a third family — the Mobilian — distinct from the Algonquins and Iroquois. The Natchez of the Lower Mississippi are supposed by some ethnologists to have been an intruding branch of the Mexican Toltecs. Far north, in Wisconsin, the well-known Winnebagos were

also intruders; they belonged to the Sioux or Dakota stock, whose home was then, as now, west of the great river.

Between the Algonquins and the Iroquois were many important differences. They differed radically, as already observed, in their speech. They differed also in their modes of building their wigwams and fortifying their villages. The mythology of the Algonquins, moreover, was distinct from that of the Iroquois. There were many degrees of barbarism among the Algonquins, from the New England tribes, which cultivated the soil, down to the Ojibwas, who were very degraded and shiftless savages. But the Iroquois were superior to any of the Algonquins. They were somewhat finer in physical appearance, and they were better fighters. They are said to have had somewhat larger brains; they understood more about agriculture; they were more capable of acting in concert. They were very well aware of their superiority, and looked down with ineffable contempt upon the Algonquins, by whom they were in turn regarded with an almost superstitious hatred and fear.

Of all the Iroquois the most formidable in numbers, the bravest in war, and the shrewdest in diplomacy were the Five Nations of New York — the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. The favourite Iroquois name for this mighty league is interesting. It was the custom of all the Iroquois tribes to build their wigwams very long and narrow. Sometimes an Iroquois house would be two hundred and fifty feet in length by thirty in width, with a door at each end. A narrow opening along the whole length






of the roof let in the light and let out some of the smoke from the row of fires kindled on the ground beneath. A rude scaffolding ran along each side some three feet from the ground, and on this the inmates slept while their firewood was piled underneath. In this way from twenty to thirty families might be lodged in a single wigwam. By a very picturesque metaphor the Iroquois of New York called their great confederacy the Long House. The Mohawks, at the Hudson River, kept the eastern door of the Long House, and the Senecas, at the Genesee, guarded the western door, while the central council fire burned in the valley of Onondaga, and was flanked to the right by the Oneidas, and to the left by the Cayugas.

The ferocity of these New York Indians was as conspicuous as their courage, and their confederated strength made them more than a match for all their rivals—so that at the time of the first French and English settlements they were rapidly becoming the terror of the whole country. Turning their arms first against their own kindred, in 1649 they overwhelmed and nearly destroyed the tribe of Hurons, putting the Jesuit missionaries to death with frightful tortures. Next they exterminated the Neutral Nation. In 1655 they massacred most of the Eries, and incorporated the rest among their own numbers; and in 1672, after a terrible war of twenty years, they completed the ruin of the Susquehannocks. At the same time they made much easier work of their Algonquin enemies. They drove the Ottawas from Canada into Michigan. They allied themselves with the Miamis, and overthrew the power of the Illinois in 1680, at the time when La Salle was making his adventurous journeys. They

then turned upon the Miamis and defeated them, and drove the Shawnees a long way down the Ohio. Some time before this they had conquered the Delawares; and this circumstance should be taken into account in considering the remarkable success of Penn and his followers in keeping clear of Indian troubles. A conciliatory policy had no doubt something to do with this; but it is not true that the Quakers were the only settlers who paid for their lands instead of taking them by force, for the Puritans of New England had done so in every case except that of the Pequods. It is worthy of consideration that, at the time when Pennsylvania was colonized, the Delawares had been thoroughly humbled by the Iroquois, and forced into a treaty by which they submitted to be called "women" and to forego the use of arms. The price of the lands sold to Penn was paid twice over — to the Delawares, who actually occupied them, and again to the Iroquois, who had obtained them by conquest. Thus the victors were kept in good humour, and the vanquished Indians did not dare to molest the Quaker settlements for fear of Iroquois vengeance.

But the Iroquois had a deeper reason for wishing to keep on good terms with the English. As early as the time of Champlain they had been brought into deadly collision with the French, who certainly had not yet learned the importance of their friendship, and perhaps were not in a condition to secure it if they had. Settling first among the Algonquin tribes of the St. Lawrence, it was perhaps inevitable that the French should court the friendship of these tribes by defending them against their hereditary enemies. In 1609 Champlain attacked the Mohawks near Ticon-

deroga, and won an easy victory over savages who had never before beheld a white man or heard the report of a musket. From that time forth the Iroquois hated the French, and after the destruction of the Huron mission the French had good reason for reciprocating the hatred. In 1664 the English supplanted the Dutch in the control of the Hudson, and thus for the first time came into formidable proximity to Canada; and now began the rivalry between French and English which lasted for ninety-nine years. A sort of alliance naturally grew up between the English and the Five Nations, while, on the other hand, the French sought to control the policy of all the Algonquin tribes from the Penobscot to the Mississippi, and to bring them into the field against the dreaded warriors of the Long House. But there was a difference between these two alliances. The English valued the friendship of the Iroquois partly as a protection against Canada, partly as a means of gaining access to the lakes and obtaining a share in the fur trade; but, in spite of all this, they took very little pains to conciliate their dusky allies, and generally left them to fight their own battles. On the other hand, the far-sighted policy of the French made firm allies of the Algonquin tribes and of the remnant of the Hurons, and taken together they were more than a match for the Iroquois. Yet for a long time the contest was by no means an unequal one. The Five Nations held their ground bravely, and at times seemed to be getting the best of it. They inflicted immense damage upon the Canadian settlements. From one end of the Long House the Mohawks were perpetually taking the war-path down Lake Champlain, while



from the other the Senecas interrupted the fur trade on the western lakes, and the central tribes infested the upper St. Lawrence. In the summer of 1689 they penetrated as far as Montreal, and shouted defiance to the garrison, while they laid waste the country for miles around, and roasted and devoured their prisoners in full sight of the terror-stricken town. This achievement, however, marked the acme of their success and of their power. The next year they had to reckon with a skilful and indomitable soldier in the person of Count Frontenac, and the fates were no longer propitious to them.

Frontenac had already been governor of New France for ten years, from 1672 to 1682. Court scandal said that he was a rival of Louis XIV. in the affections of Madame De Montespan, and that the jealous king had sent him over to America to get him out of the way. He was an able administrator and a man of large views. He even saw the desirableness of introducing an element of local self-government into the Canadian community, and strove to do so, though unsuccessfully. He sympathized with La Salle in his adventurous schemes, and aided them to the extent of his ability. Had he been properly supported by the king, he might perhaps have carried out the bold suggestion of Talon, and wrested from the English their lately acquired province of New York, thus isolating New England, and materially strengthening the grasp of France upon the American continent. But he unwisely made enemies of the Jesuits, and his fiery temper and implacable stubbornness got him into so many quarrels that, in 1682, he was ordered home. Now, after seven years of neglect,

he was reinstated by the king, and Canada welcomed him back as the only man who could save the country. No better man could have been chosen for the purpose. Though seventy years of age, he still retained something of the buoyancy of youth; in dauntless courage and fertility of resource he was not unlike his friend La Salle; and he was quite unrivalled in his knowledge of the dark and crooked ways of the Indian mind.

At Frontenac's arrival the enmities of all the hostile parties, both red and white, encamped upon American soil, were all at once allowed free play. The tyrant James II. had just been driven into exile at Versailles; and Louis XIV., unwilling to give up the check upon English policy which he had so long exercised through his ascendancy over the mean-spirited Stuarts, and enraged beyond measure at the sudden accession of power now acquired by his arch-enemy, William of Orange — Louis XIV., who had but lately revoked the Edict of Nantes, and committed himself to a deadly struggle with all the liberal tendencies of the age, now declared war against England. This, of course, meant war in the New World as well as the Old, and left the doughty Frontenac quite unhampered in his plans for striking terror into the hearts of the foes of Canada.

Frontenac's first proceeding was to send scalping parties against the English settlements, not merely to annoy the English, but also to retrieve in the minds of his Indian allies and enemies the somewhat shaken military reputation of the French. In February, 1690, a small party of Frenchmen and Algonquins from Montreal, after a difficult march of three weeks

through the snow, surprised Schenectady at midnight, and slaughtered some sixty of the inhabitants. In the following month a similar barbarous attack was made upon Salmon Falls, in New Hampshire; and shortly after, Fort Loyal, standing where now is the foot of India Street, in the city of Portland, experienced the same sort of treatment. This policy accomplished so much that it was tried again. In 1692, York was laid in ashes, and one-third of the inhabitants massacred. In 1694, two hundred and thirty Algonquins, led by one French officer and one Jesuit priest, surprised the village at Oyster River—now Durham, about twelve miles from Portsmouth—and murdered one hundred and four persons, mostly women and children. Some of the unhappy victims were burned alive. Emboldened by this success, the barbarians next attacked Groton, in Massachusetts, where they slew forty people.

Similar incursions were made from year to year. A raid on Haverhill in 1697 has become famous through the bold exploit of a village Amazon. Hannah Dustin had seven days before given birth to a child, and lay in the farmhouse, waited on by her kindly neighbour, Mary Neff. Her husband was at work in a field hard by, having with him their seven children, of whom the youngest was but two years old. All at once the war-whoop sounded in Dustin's ears, and snatching his gun and leaping on his horse he galloped toward the farmhouse, when he saw that the Indians were there before him, so that his presence would be of no avail. Turning quickly back to the field, he thought to seize as many of the children as he could, and gallop away; but when he looked upon the seven dear little faces

he knew not which to choose. So, picking up the infant, he told the others all to run on before him through the open fields, while he walked his horse and kept firing Parthian shots at the Indians. Thus for more than a mile they made their way to a fortified house, while the prudent redskins, rather than follow an armed and desperate man, chose the pleasanter task of assailing defenceless women in their homes. The new-born babe they slung against a tree, dashing out its brains, and Mrs. Dustin and Mary Neff they dragged away into the forest, whither many of their friends and neighbours had already been taken. The savages, holding a council, proceeded to tomahawk many of their prisoners, and the rest they divided among one another as prizes to be taken home to Canada and tortured to death. Mrs. Dustin and her friend were assigned to a party consisting of two warriors, three squaws, and seven young Indians, and with them there went an English boy from Worcester who had been captured some time before and understood the Algonquin language. These bloodthirsty savages were devout Catholics, brought into the Christian fold by Jesuit eloquence, and daily they counted over their rosaries and mumbled their guttural paternosters. To the natural delight which the Indian felt in roasting a captive, they could add the keener zest which thrilled the soul of the follower of Loyola in delivering up a heretic unto Satan. But Mrs. Dustin had no mind to yield herself to their horrid schemes. One night, while the Indians were sound asleep by their camp-fire in the depths of the New Hampshire forest, near the upper waters of the Merrimac, the two women and the boy rose silently and took each a tomahawk, and

with swift and well-aimed blows crushed in the skulls of ten of their sleeping enemies. One little boy they spared; one wrinkled squaw awoke betimes and fled screeching through the darkness. The ten dead savages Mrs. Dustin scalped, and getting into a bark canoe the three doughty companions floated down the Merrimac till they reached the village of Haverhill. The fame of their exploit went far and wide throughout the land. A bounty of £50 was paid them for the ten scalps, and the governor of distant Maryland sent them a present in guerdon of their prowess. The ghastly story has never been forgotten, but is told to-day to all school children, though school children are not always taught to associate these incidents with Count Frontenac, or with the expulsion of the Stuart kings from Great Britain.

Such barbarous warfare as this does not redound to the credit of Frontenac, though personally he seems to have been humane and generous according to the standards of his age and country. The delightful Jesuit historian, Charlevoix, recounts these massacres of the heretical Puritans with emphatic approval. In New England they awakened intense horror and indignation. It was resolved to attack Canada. In 1690, after the massacres at Salmon Falls and Fort Loyal, two thousand Massachusetts militia, under Sir William Phips, actually sailed up the St. Lawrence and laid siege to Quebec; while Winthrop, of Connecticut, started from Albany to create a diversion on the side of Montreal. But these amateur generals were no match for Frontenac, and both expeditions returned home crestfallen with disastrous defeat. Massachusetts, loaded with a debt of fifty thousand



pounds, was obliged for a time to issue paper money. In the following year, Peter Schuyler, with a force of New York militia and Mohawks, descended Lake Champlain, and defeated the French in a fierce and obstinate battle; but nothing came of the victory, and the end of the campaign left Frontenac master of the situation.

Having thus successfully defied the English and won a mighty reputation among his Algonquin allies, the veteran governor was now prepared to chastise the Iroquois. In 1693 a small French army under Courtemanche overran the Mohawk country and destroyed several towns, retreating after a drawn battle with Peter Schuyler. In 1696 Frontenac himself, at the head of two battalions of French regulars, eight hundred Canadian militia, and a swarm of screeching Hurons and Ottawas, crossed Lake Ontario, and battered down, so to speak, the centre of the Long House. Carried in triumph on the shoulders of the exulting Indians, the old general, now in his seventy-seventh year, advanced boldly into the sacred precincts of the Onondagas, whither white men had never yet set foot save as envoys on the most dangerous of missions, or as prisoners to be burned at the stake. Most of the Onondaga warriors fled in dismay, but their towns were utterly destroyed, all their winter stores captured, and their whole country laid waste. A similar punishment was then inflicted upon the Oneidas, and the motley army returned to Canada, taking along with them a great number of war chiefs as hostages. In the following year the Iroquois, cowed by defeat and famine, sent an embassy to Quebec to see if they could make a separate peace with the French, without

engaging to keep their hands off the Algonquins. But Frontenac flung their wampum belt back into their faces, and demanded unconditional submission, under penalty of worse treatment than they had yet experienced.

In February, 1698, the news of the peace of Ryswick ended the war, so far as the French and English were concerned. In November of the same year Frontenac died at Quebec, bitterly hated by his rivals and enemies, dreaded and admired by the Indians, idolized by the common people, and respected by all for his probity and his soldierly virtues. His stormy administration had been fruitful of benefits to Canada. By humbling the Iroquois the French ascendancy over all the Indian tribes was greatly increased. During the merciless campaigns of the past ten years the Long House had lost more than half of its warriors, and was left in such a state of dilapidation and dejection that Canada had but little to fear from it in future. In 1715 the fighting strength of the confederacy was partially repaired by the adoption of the kindred tribe of the Tuscaroras, who had just been expelled from North Carolina by the English settlers, and migrated to New York. After this accession the Iroquois, henceforth known as the Six Nations, formed a power by no means to be despised. But their haughty spirit was so far broken that they became accessible to the arts of French diplomacy, and at times they were almost persuaded to make common cause with the other Indian tribes against the English. That they did not finally forsake the English alliance was perhaps chiefly due to the extraordinary ascendancy acquired over them by Sir William Johnson, an Irish-

man who came over to America in 1734, and settled in the Mohawk Valley, building two strongholds there, known as Johnson Castle and Johnson Hall. Acquiring wealth by trade with the Indians of New York, and political importance through his skill in managing them, Johnson was made a major-general in 1755, and defeated the French at Lake George in that year, and at Niagara in 1759. He was made a baronet for his services, and died in 1774, as some say through grief at the impending prospect of war between his sovereign and his fellow-citizens.


Freed from the attacks of the Iroquois, Canada, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, entered upon a period of comparative prosperity, and during the first half of the century she continued to be a thorn in the side of New England. Before the final conflict began, France and England were at war from 1702 to 1713, and again from 1741 to 1748, a total of eighteen years, and during most of these years the New England frontier was exposed to savage inroads. There was an atrocious massacre at Deerfield in 1704, and another at Haverhill in 1708, and at all times there was terror on the frontier. Even in time of peace the Indians did not wholly cease from their incursions, and there is little doubt that their turbulence was secretly fomented by the Canadian government. In 1745 the indignant New Englanders tasted for a moment the sweets of legitimate revenge. The strongest and most important fortress of the French in America, next to Quebec, was Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island, which commanded the fisheries and the approaches to the St. Lawrence. At the instance of Governor Shirley, three thousand volunteers were

raised by Massachusetts, three hundred by New Hampshire, three hundred by Rhode Island, and five hundred by Connecticut. The whole force was commanded by William Pepperell, a merchant of Maine. With the assistance of four English ships of the line, they laid siege to Louisburg on May-day, 1745, and pressed the matter so vigorously that on the 17th of June — just thirty years before the battle of Bunker Hill — the French commander was browbeaten into surrendering his almost impregnable fortress. The gilded iron cross over the new entrance to Harvard College Library is a trophy of this memorable exploit, which not only astonished the world, but saved New England from a contemplated French invasion. Greatly to the chagrin of the American colonies, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle restored Louisburg to the French, in exchange for Madras, in Hindustan, which France had taken from England. The men of New England felt that their services were held cheap, and were much irritated at the preference accorded by the British government to its general imperial interests at the expense of its American colonies.


A great war had now become inevitable. By the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, Acadia had been ceded to England, but neither this treaty nor that of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, defined the boundary between Acadia and Maine, nor did either treaty do anything toward settling the eastern limits of Louisiana. The Penobscot Valley furnished one ever burning question, and the New York frontier another. The dispute over the Ohio Valley was the fiercest of all, and from this quarter at last arose the conflagration which swept away all the hopes of French colonial empire in

two hemispheres. In 1750, the Ohio Company, formed for the purpose of colonizing the valley, had surveyed the country as far as the present site of Louisville. In 1753 the French, taking the alarm, crossed Lake Erie and began to fortify themselves at Presque Isle and at Venango on the Allegheny River. This aroused the ire of Virginia, and George Washington—a venturesome and hardy youth of twenty-one, but gifted with a sagacity beyond his years—was sent by Governor Dinwiddie to Venango to order off the trespassers. Washington got scanty comfort from this mission; but the next spring both French and English tried to forestall each other in fortifying the all-important place where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers join to form the Ohio, the place where the city of Pittsburg now stands. In the course of these preliminary manœuvres, Washington fought his first battle at Great Meadows,—though as yet war had not been declared between France and England,—and being attacked by an overwhelmingly superior force, was obliged to surrender, with the whole of his little army. So the French got possession of the much-coveted situation, and erected there Fort Duquesne as a menace to all future English intruders. In 1755 the English accepted the challenge, and it was in attempting to reach Fort Duquesne that the unwary Braddock was slain, and his army so wofully defeated by swarms of Ottawas, Hurons, and Delawares, which the Frenchmen's forest diplomacy had skilfully gathered together.

The defeat of Braddock is memorable on many accounts, but chiefly for the way in which it inured to the credit of the youthful Washington, while it dis-



pelled the glamour of invincibleness which had hitherto hung about the trained soldiery of Britain. When Braddock was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces which were to ward off French aggression in the Ohio Valley, he set about his task in high spirits. He told Benjamin Franklin that Fort Duquesne could hardly detain him more than three or four days, and then he would be ready to march across country to Niagara, and thence to Fort Frontenac. And when the sagacious Franklin reminded him that the Indians were adepts in the art of laying ambuscades, he scornfully answered, "The savages may be formidable to your raw American militia; upon the king's regulars and disciplined troops it is impossible that they should make any impression." In this too confident mood the expedition started. There were more than two thousand men in all, — British regulars, and colonial militia from Virginia and New York. Washington was there as aid to General Braddock, and along with him, arrayed under one banner, were Horatio Gates and Thomas Gage. In every way Braddock made light of his American allies, calling in question, not only their bravery and skill, but even their common honesty, and behaving in all respects as disagreeably as he could. Their road was difficult in the extreme. At its best it was a bridle-path no more than ten feet wide, and desperately encumbered with underbrush and fallen tree-trunks. Through the dense forest and over the rugged mountains they thus made their way in a straggling line nearly four miles long, exposed at every moment to sudden overthrow by a flank attack; and so slow was their progress that it took them five weeks to accomplish one hundred and thirty miles.



Wearied and impatient of such delay, Braddock at last left his heavy guns and wagons, and pushed on with twelve hundred picked men till he was within ten miles of Fort Duquesne. Suddenly the dense woods were ablaze on every side with the fire of rifles wielded by an invisible foe. The ambushade had been most skilfully prepared by Charles de Langlade, a redoubtable *coureur de bois*. It was in vain that a few cannon were tardily hauled upon the scene. The regulars were overcome with panic and thrown into hopeless disorder, while the merciless fire cut down scores every minute. Out of eighty officers, sixty were soon disabled. Braddock, after having five horses shot under him, fell, mortally wounded. The Virginia troops alone kept in order under the terrible fire, and Washington, putting himself at their head, covered the flight of the British remnant and saved it from utter destruction. Of the twelve hundred picked men, more than seven hundred were slain; all the artillery and baggage wagons were lost; the frontiers of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were uncovered, and the dreadful story of Indian massacre soon began in the outlying villages. In this fierce woodland fight the loss of the ambushed Frenchmen and Indians had not exceeded sixty men. The fame of the British overthrow went far and wide throughout North America. Its immediate consequences were soon repaired, but the lesson which it taught was not soon forgotten. As the unfortunate Braddock had himself invited the comparison, men were not slow in contrasting the inefficiency of the British officers and troops with the stanchness of the Virginians and the skill of their young commander. And in later years, when in town

meetings and at tavern firesides men discussed the feasibility of resisting George III., the incidents of Braddock's defeat did not fail to point a suggestive moral.

The war thus inauspiciously begun was not confined to American soil. After three-quarters of a century of vague skirmishing, England was now prepared to measure her strength with France in a decisive struggle for colonial empire and for the lordship of the sea. The whole world was convulsed with the struggle of the Seven Years' War—a war more momentous in its consequences than any that had ever yet been carried on between rival European powers; a war made illustrious by the genius of one of the greatest generals, and of perhaps the very greatest war minister, the world has ever seen. It was an evil hour for French hopes of colonial empire when the invincible prowess of Frederick the Great was allied with the far-sighted policy of William Pitt. In the autumn of 1757, shortly after the Great Commoner was intrusted with the direction of the foreign affairs of England, the king of Prussia annihilated the French army at Rossbach, and thus—to say nothing of the immediate results—prepared the way for Waterloo and Sedan, and for the creation of a united and independent Germany. Yet, in spite of this overwhelming victory, the united strength of France and Austria and Russia would at last have proved too much for the warlike king, had not England thrown sword and purse into the scale in his favour. By his firm and energetic support of Prussia, Pitt kept the main strength of France busily occupied in Europe, while English fleets attacked her on the ocean, and English armies overran her posses-



sions in America, and wrested from her grasp the control of India, which she was also seeking to acquire.

At the time of Pitt's accession to power, affairs were not going on prosperously in America. The crushing defeat of Braddock had, indeed, been followed by the victory of Johnson over Dieskau at Lake George. But this victory did more harm than good; for Johnson remained inactive after it, and Dieskau, having been taken prisoner, was succeeded by the famous Marquis of Montcalm, a general of great ability, who resumed offensive operations with vigour and success. In 1756 Montcalm destroyed Oswego; in 1757 he captured Fort William Henry, which Johnson had built to defend the northern approaches to the Hudson; and in 1758 he defeated the English with heavy loss in the desperate battle of Ticonderoga.

This signal defeat of the English possesses some interest as one among many illustrations of the difficulty of carrying by storm a strongly intrenched position. In July, 1758, General Abercrombie, at the head of fifteen thousand men, the largest army that had ever been assembled in America, crossed Lake George, and advanced upon the strong position which barred the approach to Canada from the valley of the Hudson. In a preliminary skirmish was slain Lord Howe, elder brother of the admiral and the general of the War of Independence, an able and gallant officer, who had so endeared himself to the Americans that Massachusetts afterward raised a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey. The force with which Montcalm held Ticonderoga numbered little more than three thousand, and as it was thought that reënforcements were on their way to him, Abercrombie decided to hazard a direct as-

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sault. The result was a useless slaughter, like that which the present generation has witnessed at Fredericksburg and Cold Harbor. After an obstinate struggle of four hours, in which the gallant Englishmen dashed themselves repeatedly against a stout breastwork nine feet high, they lost heart and withdrew in disorder, leaving two thousand men killed or wounded on the field. For this disastrous error of judgment Abercrombie was superseded by General Amherst.

The victory of Ticonderoga was, however, the last considerable success of the French arms in this war. The stars in their courses had begun to fight against them, and, with the exception of this brief gleam of triumph, their career for the next two years was an unbroken succession of disasters. In 1758 the French fleets were totally defeated by Admiral Osborne off Cartagena, and by Admiral Pococke in the Indian Ocean, while their great squadron destined for North America was driven ashore in the Bay of Biscay by Sir Edward Hawke. In Germany, their army was defeated by the Prince of Brunswick, at Crefeld, in June.

In America prodigious exertions were made. Massachusetts raised 7000 men, and during the year contributed more than a million dollars toward the expenses of the war. Connecticut raised 5000 troops; New Hampshire and Rhode Island furnished 1000 between them; New York raised 2680; New Jersey, 1000; Pennsylvania, 2700; Virginia, 2000, and South Carolina, 1250. With these provincial troops, with 22,000 British regulars, and with an especial levy of Highlanders from Scotland, there were in all 50,000 troops collected for the overthrow of the French power

in America. With such vigorous preparations as these, events proceeded rapidly. In July, General Amherst captured Louisburg, and finally relieved New England from its standing menace, besides securing the mouth of the St. Lawrence. In August, General Bradstreet, by the destruction of Fort Frontenac, broke the communication between Canada and the French settlements in the West. In November, General Forbes, having built a road over the Alleghanies and being assisted by Washington and Henry Bouquet, succeeded in capturing Fort Duquesne, which then became Fort Pitt, and now as Pittsburg still bears the name of the great war minister.

The capture of this important post gave the English the control of the Ohio Valley, and thus secured the object for which the war had been originally undertaken. Great were the rejoicings in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and great was the honour accorded to Washington, to whose skill the capture of the "gateway of the West" had been chiefly due. But Pitt had now made up his mind to drive the French from America altogether, and what had been done was only the prelude to heavier blows. Terrible was the catalogue of French defeats. In 1759 their army in Germany was routed at Minden by the Prince of Brunswick; one great fleet was defeated at Lagos Bay by Admiral Boscawen, and another was annihilated at Quiberon by Sir Edward Hawke; Havre was bombarded by Admiral Rodney; Guadeloupe, the most valuable of the French West Indies, was taken; and serious reverses were experienced in India. In America, Niagara was taken on the 24th of July, Ticonderoga on the 27th, and Crown Point on the 1st of August. And


the 13th of September witnessed the last great scene in this eventful story.

Crestfallen with calamity, the people of Canada had begun to cry for peace at any price; but Montcalm, ensconced with seven thousand men in the impregnable stronghold of Quebec, declared that, though the outlook was anything but cheering, he had not lost courage, but was resolved to find his grave under the ruins of the colony. Quebec was the objective point of the summer campaign, and early in June the youthful General Wolfe had appeared in the St. Lawrence with an army of eight thousand men, supported by a powerful fleet of twenty-two ships of the line, with as many frigates. In this memorable expedition Colonel Barré, afterward the eloquent friend of the American colonies in Parliament, was adjutant-general; a regiment of light infantry was commanded by William Howe; and one of the ships had for its captain the immortal navigator, James Cook. It was intended that Johnson, after taking Niagara, and Amherst, after taking Ticonderoga and Crown Point, should unite their forces with those of Wolfe, and overwhelm the formidable Montcalm by sheer weight of numbers. But Johnson failed for want of ships to transport his men, and Amherst failed through dulness of mind, so that Wolfe was left to do the work alone. The task was well-nigh impossible, though the powerful English fleet had full control of the river. Standing on a lofty rock just above the junction of the St. Charles and St. Lawrence rivers, and guarded by water on three sides, Quebec was open to a land attack only on the northwest side, where the precipice was so steep as to be deemed inaccessible. After wasting the summer in

abortive attacks and fruitless efforts to take the wary Montcalm at a disadvantage, Wolfe suddenly made up his mind to perform the impossible, and lead his army up the dangerous precipice. A decided movement of the fleet drew Montcalm's attention far up the river, while at one o'clock in the morning of the 13th of September five thousand Englishmen in boats, without touching an oar, glided steadily down-stream with the current, and landed just under the steep bluff. Maple and ash trees grew on the side, and pulling themselves up by branches and bare gnarled roots from tree to tree, with herculean toil the light infantry gained the summit and overpowered the small picket stationed there, while the heavy-armed troops made their way up a rough winding path near by. By daybreak the ascent was accomplished, and the English army stood in solid array on the Heights of Abraham, with the doomed city before them. When the news was conveyed to Montcalm, in his camp the other side of the St. Charles, he thought at first that it must be a feint to draw him from his position; but when he had so far recovered from his astonishment as to comprehend what had happened, he saw that his only hope lay in crushing the intruders before noon, and without a moment's delay he broke camp and marched for the enemy. At ten o'clock the two armies stood face to face, equal in numbers, but very unequal in quality. The five thousand Englishmen were all thoroughly disciplined soldiers, while of Montcalm's force but two thousand were French regulars, the rest being unsteady Canadian militia. France was kept altogether too busy in Europe to be able to spare many trained soldiers to defend her tottering empire in America.

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After an hour of weak cannonading the French army charged upon the Englishmen, who stood as firm as a stone wall and with a swift and steady musket fire soon made the French recoil. As soon as the French attack wavered, the English in turn promptly charged, and the enemy were routed. In this supreme moment the two heroic commanders were borne from the field with mortal wounds, and as life ebbed quickly away each said his brief and touching word which history will never forget. "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace," said Wolfe; "Thank God, I shall not live to see Quebec surrendered," said the faithful Frenchman. These noble deaths, and the wild hardihood of the feat that had just been accomplished, mark well the battle which completed the ruin of the colonial empire of Catholic and despotic France. There have been many greater generals than Wolfe, as there have been many greater battles than the battle of Quebec. But just as the adventurous boldness of that morning's exploit stands unsurpassed in history, so in its far-reaching historic significance the victory of Wolfe stands foremost among modern events. As the boats were gliding quietly down the river in the darkness, while the great events of the next ten hours were still in the unknown future, the young general repeated to his friends standing about him the exquisite verses of Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard," which had been published only ten years before, and declared that he would rather have written that poem than take Quebec. Could he have foreseen all that his victory would mean to future ages, and what a landmark it would forever remain in the history of mankind, he might perhaps have modi-



fied this generous judgment. The battle of Quebec did not make the supremacy of the English race in the world; but as marking the moment at which that supremacy first became clearly manifest, it deserves even more than the meed of fame which history has assigned to it.

During the progress of this eventful war, the tribes of the Long House, under the influence of Sir William Johnson, had either remained neutral, or had occasionally assisted the English cause. The Algonquin tribes, however, from east to west — including even the Delawares, who, since the decline of the Iroquois power, no longer consented to call themselves women — made common cause with the French, and in many cases proved very formidable allies. The overthrow of the French power came as a terrible shock to these Indians, who now found themselves quite unprotected from English encroachment. At first they refused to believe that the catastrophe was irretrievable, and one great Indian conceived a plan for retrieving it.

Of all the Indians of whom we have any record, there were few more remarkable for intellectual power than Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas. He was as fierce and treacherous as any of his race, but he was characterized by an intellectual curiosity very rare among barbarians, and he exhibited an amount of forethought truly wonderful in an Indian. It seemed to him that if all the tribes in the country could be brought to unite in one grand attack upon the English, they might perhaps succeed in overthrowing them. It was a scheme like that which perhaps on insufficient grounds has been ascribed to the Wampanoag Philip, but the war set on foot by Pontiac was of far greater dimen-

sions than "King Philip's War," though the suffering and terror it inflicted were confined to what then seemed a distant frontier. The time had gone by when the English colonies could suppose, even in a momentary fit of wild despondency, that their existence was seriously threatened. The scene of Pontiac's war, compared with Philip's, marks the progress of the white men, and shows how far the exposed frontier had been thrown westward. After the conquest of Canada the Indian disappears forever from the history of New England, and except in the remote forests of northern Maine hardly a vestige of his presence has been left there. The tribes which Pontiac aroused to bloodshed were the Algonquin tribes of the Upper Lakes, and of the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, with some of the Mobilians and the remnant of the Hurons; and out of the Iroquois league his crafty eloquence prevailed upon the most numerous tribe, the Senecas, who were less completely under English influence than their brethren east of the Genesee.


The peace of 1763 between France and England had been signed but three short months when this new war unexpectedly broke out. Two years of savage butchery ensued, in the course of which nearly all the forest garrisons in the West were overcome and massacred, though the stronger places, such as Detroit and Fort Pitt, succeeded with some difficulty in holding out. The wild frontier of Pennsylvania became the scene of atrocities which beggar description. Night after night the forest clearings were made hideous with the glare of blazing log cabins and the screams of murdered women and children. The traveller through the depths of the



woods was frequently appalled by the sight of the scorched and blackened corpses of men and women tightly bound to tree-trunks, where their lives had gone out amid diabolical torments. During the summer and autumn of 1763 more than two thousand persons were murdered or carried into captivity, while the more sheltered towns and villages to the eastward were crowded with starving refugees who had escaped the firebrand and the tomahawk.

One fiendish incident of that bad time especially called forth the horror and rage of the people. A man, passing by a little schoolhouse rudely built of logs and standing on a lonely road, but many miles inside the frontier, "was struck by the unwonted silence; and, pushing open the door, he looked in. In the centre lay the master, scalped and lifeless, with a Bible clasped in his hand; while around the room were strewn the bodies of his pupils, nine in number, miserably mangled, though one of them still retained a spark of life." Maddened by such dreadful deeds, and unable to obtain from the government at Philadelphia a force adequate for the protection of their homes, the men of the frontier organized themselves into armed bands, and soon began to make reprisals that were both silly and cruel, inasmuch as they fell upon the wrong persons. The principal headquarters of these frontier companies was at Paxton, a small town on the east bank of the Susquehanna; and their first memorable exploit was the sack of Conestoga, a village of friendly Indians of Iroquois lineage, who had some time since undergone a transformation from scalp-hunting savages into half-civilized vagabonds, and had in no way molested the English settlers. This out-

rage called forth a proclamation from the governor, condemning the act and offering a reward for the apprehension of the persons concerned in it, while the survivors of the Conestoga massacre were hurried to Lancaster, and lodged in the jail there to get them out of harm's way. The Paxton men, greatly incensed at what they considered the hostile action of the Quaker government, and determined not to be balked of their prey, galloped into Lancaster, broke into the jail, and murdered all the Indians who were sheltered there. In the rural districts these deeds were generally excused as the acts of men goaded to desperation by unutterable wrongs; but in the cultivated Quaker society of Philadelphia they were regarded with horror, and contentions arose which were embittered by theological prejudice, since the Paxton men were mostly Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish ancestry, and boldly justified their conduct by texts from the Old Testament. As the excitement increased, the Paxton men, to the number of a thousand, marched on Philadelphia, with intent to overawe the government and to wreak their vengeance on an innocent party of Christian Indians who were quartered on an island a little below the city. There was great alarm in the city, but when the rioters arrived at Germantown, they saw that to capture Philadelphia would far exceed their powers; and they listened to the wise counsel of Franklin, who advised them to go home and guard the troubled frontier, a task for which none were better fitted than they. The danger of civil strife being thus averted, the flame of controversy burned itself out in a harmless pamphlet war, in which Quakers and Presbyterians heaped argument and ridicule upon each other to their heart's



content. Meanwhile, at Bushy Run, in the Alleghanies, Henry Bouquet won the fiercest battle ever fought between white men and Indians; and in the course of the next year he made his way far into the Ohio country, and completely humbled the Shawnees and Delawares, so that they were fain to sue for peace. This campaign wrought the ruin of the great Indian conspiracy. The Senecas were browbeaten by Johnson, the French refused to lend any assistance, and finally Pontiac, after giving in his submission, was murdered in the woods at Cahokia, near St. Louis. Useless butchery was all that ever came of his deep-laid scheme, as it is all that has ever come of most Indian schemes; but the "Conspiracy of Pontiac" is worth remembering as a natural sequel of the great French war, as the most serious attempt ever made by the Indians to assert themselves against white men, and as the theme of one of the most brilliant and fascinating books that has ever been written by any historian since the days of Herodotus.

The Seven Years' War did not come to an end until Spain, afraid for her possessions in the East and West Indies, had taken up arms on the side of France. She thus invited the catastrophe which she dreaded, for in 1762 England conquered Cuba and the Philippine Islands. At the definitive treaty of peace, known as the peace of Paris, and signed in February, 1763, England gave back Cuba and the Philippine Islands to Spain in exchange for Florida. To indemnify Spain for this loss of Florida, incurred through her alliance with France, the latter power ceded to Spain the town of New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi — a vast and ill-defined region, as

thoroughly unknown at that day as Australia or Central Africa. From 1763 until 1803 New Orleans and St. Louis were accordingly governed by Spaniards. In 1803 this vast region was ceded by Spain to Bonaparte, who sold it to the United States for fifteen million dollars. Florida, on the other hand, was returned to Spain by England at the close of the Revolutionary War, and was afterward, in 1819, bought from Spain by the United States.

All of Louisiana east of the Mississippi except New Orleans, and all of Canada, were at the peace of Paris surrendered to England, so that not a rood of land in all North America remained to France. France also renounced all claim upon India, and it went without saying that England, and not France, was now to be mistress of the sea.

It may be said of the treaty of Paris that no other treaty ever transferred such an immense portion of the earth's surface from one nation to another. But such a statement, after all, gives no adequate idea of the enormous results which the genius of English liberty had for ages been preparing, and which had now found definite expression in the policy of William Pitt. The 10th of February, 1763, might not unfitly be celebrated as the proudest day in the history of England. For on that day it was made clear—had any one had eyes to discern the future, and read between the lines of this portentous treaty—that she was destined to become the revered mother of many free and enlightened nations, all speaking the matchless language which the English Bible has forever consecrated, and earnest in carrying out the sacred ideas for which Latimer suffered and Hampden fought. It was pro-

claimed on that day that the institutions of the Roman Empire, however useful in their time, were at last outgrown and superseded, and that the guidance of the world was henceforth to be, not in the hands of imperial bureaus or papal conclaves, but in the hands of the representatives of honest labour and the preachers of righteousness, unhampered by ritual or dogma. The independence of the United States was the first great lesson which was drawn from this solemn proclamation. Our own history is to-day the first extended commentary which is gradually unfolding to men's minds the latent significance of the compact by which the vanquished Old Régime of France renounced its pretensions to guide the world. In days to come, the lesson will be taken up and reiterated by other great communities planted by England, in Africa, in Australia, and the islands of the Pacific, until barbarous sacerdotalism and despotic privilege shall have vanished from the face of the earth, and the principles of Protestantism, rightly understood, and of English self-government, shall have become forever the undisputed possession of all mankind.

# **IV**

## **CONNECTICUT'S INFLUENCE ON THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION**



## IV

### CONNECTICUT'S INFLUENCE ON THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

CONNECTICUT'S influence on the first beginnings and final establishment of our Federal government has attracted little attention; and this is but one among many instances of the fact that a really intelligent and fruitful study of American history is only an affair of yesterday.

It is surprising to think how little attention was paid to the subject half a century ago. I believe that, as schoolboys, we did learn something about some of the battles in the War of Independence, and two or three of the sea-fights of the years 1812-1815; but our knowledge of earlier times was limited to dim notions about Captain John Smith and the Pilgrim Fathers, while now and then perhaps there flitted across our minds the figures of Putnam and the wolf or a witch or two swinging from the gallows in Salem village, or the painted Indians rushing with wild war-whoop into Schenectady. Small pains were taken to teach us the significance of things that had happened at our very doors. I was myself a native of Hartford, yet long after Plymouth Rock had come to mean something to me, the names of Thomas Hooker and Samuel Stone fell upon my ears as mere empty sound. Much as we were given to bragging, in Fourth of July speeches, on our fine and mighty




qualities, we were modestly unconscious of the fact that some of our early worthies were personages as interesting and memorable as their brethren who fought the Lord's battles under Cromwell. In those days when our great historian, Francis Parkman, published his first work, the fascinating book which described the conspiracy of Pontiac, the greater part of the first edition lay for years untouched on the publishers' shelves, and one of the author's friends said to him: "Parkman, why don't you take some European subject,—something that people will be interested in? Why don't you write about the times of Michael Angelo, or the Wars of the Roses, or the age of Louis XIV.? Nobody cares to read about what happened out here in the woods a hundred years ago." Parkman's reply was like Luther's on a greater occasion, "I do what I do because I cannot do otherwise." That was, of course, the answer of the inspired man marked out by destiny for a needed work.

An incident which occurred in my own experience more than twenty years ago has not yet lost for me its ludicrous flavour. A gentleman in a small New England town was asked if some lectures of mine on "America's Place in History" would be likely to find a good audience there. He reflected for a moment, then shook his head gravely. "The subject," said he, "is one which would interest very few people." In the state of mind thus indicated there is something so bewildering that I believe I have not yet recovered from it.

During the past twenty years, however, the interest in American history has been at once increasing and growing enlightened. Every year finds a greater number of people directing their attention to the



subject, and directing it in a more intelligent way. Twenty years ago the Johns Hopkins University set the example of publishing a monthly series of pamphlets setting forth the results of special research upon topics that had either escaped attention or been very inadequately treated. One paper would discuss the functions of constables in New England in the early days; another would inquire into the causes of the piracy that infested our coasts at the end of the seventeenth century; another would make the history of town and county government in Illinois as absorbing as a novel; another would treat of old Maryland manors, another of the influence of Quakers upon antislavery sentiment in North Carolina, and so on. Many of the writers of these papers, trained in the best methods of historical study, have become professors of history in our colleges from one end of the Union to the other, and are sowing good seed where they go; while other colleges have begun to follow the example thus set. From Harvard and Columbia and the Universities of Wisconsin and Nebraska come especially notable contributions to our study each year. In Kentucky a Filson Club investigates the early overflow of our population across the Alleghanies; in Milwaukee a Parkman Club discusses questions raised by the books of that great writer, while books long forgotten or never before printed are now made generally accessible. Thus the Putnams of New York are bringing out ably edited sets of the writings of the men who founded this republic. Thus Dr. Coues has clothed with fresh life the journals and letters of the great explorers who opened up our Pacific country; while a crowning achievement has been the publication in Cleveland,



Ohio, of the seventy-three volumes of Jesuit Relations written during two centuries by missionaries in North America to their superiors in France or Italy. Such things speak eloquently of the change that has come over us. They show that while we can still draw lessons from the Roman Forum and the Frankish Field-of-March, we have awakened to the fact that the New England town-meeting also has its historic lessons.

Now when we come to the early history of Connecticut and consider the circumstances under which it was founded, we are soon impressed with the unusual significance and importance of every step in the story. We are soon brought to see that the secession of the three river towns from Massachusetts was an event no less memorable than the voyage of the *Mayflower* or the arrival of Winthrop's great colony in Massachusetts Bay. In order to appreciate its significance, we may begin by pointing out one very marked and noticeable peculiarity of the early arrangement and distribution of population in New England. It formed a great contrast to what occurred in Virginia. The decisive circumstance which insured the success of the Virginia colony after its early period of distress sometimes reaching despair, was the growing European demand for tobacco. The commercial basis of Old Virginia's existence was the exportation of tobacco raised upon large estates along the bank of the James and neighbouring rivers. Now we find that colony growing steadily inland in a compact mass presenting a united front against the wilderness and its denizens. We do not find a few settlements on James River, a few on the Rappahannock, and another group perhaps at Lynchburg, quite out of military supporting distance

of each other; in other words, we do not find a group of distinct communities, but we find one little state, the further development of which might make a great state, as it did, but could never make a federation of states. If we look at such a colony as Pennsylvania, where Church and State were from the outset completely separated, quite as much as in Rhode Island, we find a similar compactness of growth; we find the colony presenting to the wilderness a solid front. If we next consider New Netherland, we notice a slight difference. There we find a compact colony with its centre on Manhattan Island, and far up the river another settlement at Albany quite beyond easy supporting distance and apparently exposed to all the perils of the wilderness. But this settlement of Albany is readily explained, for there was the powerful incentive of the rich fur trade, while the perils of the wilderness were in great measure eliminated by the firm alliance between Dutchmen and Mohawks.


Now when we come to the settlement of New England, we find things going very differently. Had the Puritan settlers behaved like most other colonists, their little state, beginning on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, would have grown steadily and compactly westward, pushing the Indians before it. First, it would have brushed away the Wampanoags and Naticks; then the Narragansetts and Nipmucks would have succumbed to them, and in due course of time they would have reached the country of the Pequots and Mohegans. That would have been like the growth of Virginia. It would have been a colonial growth of the ordinary type and it would have resulted in a single New England state, not in a group bearing that name.

Very different from this was the actual course of events. Instead of this solid growth, we find within the first ten years after Winthrop's arrival in Massachusetts Bay that while his colony was still in the weakness of infancy, even while its chief poverty, as John Cotton said, was poverty in men, the new arrivals instead of reinforcing it, marched off into the wilderness, heedless of danger, and formed new colonies for themselves. This phenomenon is so singular as to demand explanation, and the explanation is not far to seek. We shall find it in the guiding purpose which led the Puritans of that day to cross the ocean in quest of new homes.

What was that guiding purpose? This is a subject upon which cheap moralizing has abounded. We have been told that the Puritans came to New England in search of religious liberty, and that with reprehensible want of consistency, they proceeded to trample upon religious liberty as ruthlessly as any of the churches that had been left behind in the old world. We often hear it said that Mrs. Hemans laboured under a fond delusion when she wrote


"They have left unstained what there they found,  
Freedom to worship God."

By no means! cry the modern critics of the Puritans; their record in respect of religious freedom was as far as possible from stainless. From much of the modern writing on this well-worn theme one would almost suppose that religious bigotry had never existed in the world until the settlement of New England; one would almost be led to fancy that racks and thumb-screws and the stake had never been heard of.



Now the difficulty with this sort of historic criticism is that it deals too much in vague generalities and quite overlooks the fact that there were Puritans and Puritans, that the God-fearing men of that stripe were not all cast in the same mould, like Professor Clerk Maxwell's atoms. I have more than once heard people allude to the restriction of the suffrage to church members in the early days of Massachusetts and Connecticut, which is very much as if one were to make statements about the despotic government of Czar Nicholas and Queen Victoria. Still more frequently do people confound the men of Plymouth with the very different company that founded Boston. As to Mrs. Hemans, her remark was not so very far from the truth if restricted to the colony of the Pilgrims, about which she was writing. On the whole, the purpose of that little band of Pilgrims was to secure freedom to worship after their own fashion, and similar freedom they were measurably ready to accord to those who came among them. They had witnessed in Holland the good effects of religious liberty, and their attitude of mind was largely determined by the strong personal qualities of such men as John Robinson, William Bradford, and Edward Winslow, who were all noted for breadth, gentleness, and tact. The record of Plymouth is not quite unstained by persecution, but it is an eminently good one for the seventeenth century; the cases are few and by no means flagrant.

With the colony of Massachusetts Bay the circumstances were entirely different. That colony was at the outset a commercial company, like the great company which founded Virginia and afterward had such an interesting struggle with James I., ending in the loss



of the Virginia Company's charter and its destruction as a political body. This fate served as a warning five years later to the Massachusetts Bay Company. Instead of staying in London where hostile courts and the means of enforcing their hostile decrees were too near at hand, they decided to carry their charter across the ocean and carry out their cherished purposes as far removed as possible from interference. Their commercial aims were but a cloak to cover the purpose they had most at heart, — a purpose which could not be avowed by any party of men seeking for a royal charter. Their purpose was to found a theocratic commonwealth, like that of the children of Israel in the good old days before their froward hearts conceived the desire for a king. There was no thought of throwing off allegiance to the British crown; but saving such allegiance, their purpose was to build up a theocratic society according to their own notions, and not for one moment did they propose to tolerate among them any persons whom they deemed unfit or unwilling to coöperate with them in their scheme. As for religious toleration, they scouted the very idea of the thing. There was no imputation which they resented more warmly than the imputation of treating heretics cordially, as they were treated in the Netherlands. The writings of Massachusetts men in the seventeenth century leave no possibility of doubt on this point. John Cotton was not a man of persecuting temperament, but of religious liberty he had a very one-sided conception. According to Cotton, it is wrong for error to persecute truth, but it is the sacred duty of truth to persecute error. Which reminds one of the Hottentot chief's fine ethical distinction between right

and wrong: "Wrong is when somebody runs off with my wife; right is when I run off with some other fellow's wife." As for Nathaniel Ward, the "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," he tells us that there are people in the world who say, "that men ought to have liberty of their conscience, and that it is persecution to debar them of it." And what answer has the Simple Cobbler to make? He is for the moment struck dumb. He declares, "I can rather stand amazed than reply to this; it is an astonishment to think that the brains of men should be parboiled in such impious ignorance; let all the wits under the heavens lay their heads together and find an assertion worse than this . . . and I will petition to be chosen the universal idiot of the world." The reverend gentleman who writes in this pungent style was the person who drew up the first code adopted in Massachusetts, the code which is known as its "Body of Liberties." One and all, these men who shaped the policy of Massachusetts would have echoed with approval the sentiment of the Scottish divine, Rutherford, who declared that toleration of all religions is not far removed from blasphemy. Holding such opinions, they resented the imputation of tolerance in much the same spirit as that in which most members of the Republican party in the years just preceding our Civil War resented the imputation of being Abolitionists.

While the founders of Massachusetts thus stoutly opposed religious liberty their opinions did not bear their worst fruits until after the middle of the century, when men of persecuting temperament like Norton and Endicott acquired control. In the earlier years the fiery zeal of such men as Wilson and Dudley was



tempered by the fine tact and moderation of Winthrop and Cotton. Winthrop's view of such matters was interesting and suggestive. In substance it was as follows: Here we are in the wilderness, a band of exiles who have given up all the comforts of our old homes, all the tender associations of the land we love best, in order to found a state according to a preconceived ideal in which most of us agree. We believe it to be important that the members of a Christian commonwealth should all hold the same opinions regarding essentials, and of course it is for us to determine what are essentials. If people who have come here with us hold different views, they have made a great mistake and had better go back to England. But if, holding different views, they still wish to remain in America, let them leave us in peace, and going elsewhere, found communities according to their conceptions of what is best. We do not wish to quarrel with them, but we will tell them plainly that they cannot stay here. Is there not, in this vast wilderness, enough elbow-room for many God-fearing communities?

It was in accordance with this policy that when the first Congregational church was organized at Salem, two gentlemen who disapproved of the proceedings were sent on board ship and carried back to England. And again, when profound offence had been taken at certain things said by Roger Williams and there was some talk of sending him to England, he was privately notified by Winthrop that if he would retire to some place beyond the Company's jurisdiction, such as Narragansett Bay, he need not fear molestation. This was virtually banishment, though not so sharp and harsh as that which was visited upon

Mrs. Hutchinson and her friends after their conviction of heresy by a tribunal sitting in what is now Cambridge. Some of these heretics led by John Wheelwright went northward to the Piscataqua country. At the mouth of that romantic stream the Episcopal followers of Mason and Gorges had lately founded the town of Portsmouth, and Wheelwright's people, in settling Exeter and Hampton, found these Episcopalians much pleasanter neighbours than they had left in Boston. As for Mrs. Hutchinson and her remaining friends, they found new homes upon Rhode Island. A few years later that eccentric agitator, Samuel Gorton, whom neither Plymouth nor even Providence nor Rhode Island could endure, bought land for himself on the western shore of Narragansett Bay and made the beginnings of Warwick.

From these examples we see that the principal cause of the scattering of New England settlers in communities somewhat remote from each other was inability to agree on sundry questions pertaining to religion. It should be observed in passing that their differences of opinion seldom related to points of doctrine, but almost always to points of church government or religious discipline. For the most part they were questions on the borderland between theology and politics. Between the settlements here mentioned the differences were strongly marked. While Winthrop's followers insisted upon the union of Church and State, those of Roger Williams insisted upon their complete separation. The divergences of the New Hampshire people and those of the Newport colony had somewhat more of a doctrinal complexion, being implicated with sundry speculations as to salvation by grace and salvation

by works. These examples have prepared us to understand the case of Connecticut. The secession which gave rise to Connecticut was attended by no such stormy scenes as were witnessed at the banishment of Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson, yet it included a greater number of elements of historic significance and was in many ways the most important and remarkable of the instances of segmentation which occurred in early New England.

When the charter of the Massachusetts Company was brought to the western shore of the Atlantic, the mere fact of separation from England sufficed to transmute the commercial corporation into a self-governing republic. The company had its governor, its deputy-governor, and its council of eighteen assistants, as was commonly the case with commercial joint-stock companies. In London this governing board would have exercised almost autocratic control over the transactions of the company, although politically it would have remained a body unknown to law, however much influence it might have exerted. But on American soil the company at once became a political body, and its governor, deputy-governor, and assistants became the ruling head of a small republic consisting of the company's settlers in Salem, Charlestown, Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, Watertown, and a little group of houses halfway between Watertown and Boston and known for a while simply as the New Town. This designation indicated its comparative youth; it was about a year younger than its sister towns! Nothing was said in the charter about a popular representative assembly, and at first the government did not feel the need of one. They were men of strong characters,

who knew what they wanted and intended to have it. They had selected the New Town for a seat of government, since it was somewhat less exposed to destruction from a British fleet than Boston; and these men were doing things well calculated to arouse the ire of King Charles. They felt themselves quite competent to sit in the New Town and make laws which should be binding upon all the neighbouring settlements. But they soon received a reminder that such was not the way in which freeborn Englishmen like to be treated. In 1631 the governor, deputy-governor, and assistants decided that on its western side the New Town was too much exposed to attacks from Indians. Accordingly, it was voted that a palisade should be built extending about half a mile inland from Charles River, and a tax was assessed upon the towns to meet the expense of this fortification. The men of Watertown flatly refused to pay their share of this tax because they were not represented in the body which imposed it. These proceedings were followed by a great primary assembly of all the settlers competent to vote and it was decided that hereafter each town should send representatives to a general assembly, the assent of which should be necessary to all the acts of the governor and his council. Thus was inaugurated the second free republican government of America, the first having been inaugurated in Virginia thirteen years before, and both having been copied from the county government of England in the old English county court.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The experiment of federalism is not a new one. The Greeks applied to it their supple and inventive genius with many interesting results, but they failed because the only kind of popular government they knew was the town-meeting; and of course you cannot bring together forty or fifty town-meetings from different points of the compass to some common centre

The protest of the Watertown men gave expression to a feeling that had many sympathizers in Dorchester and the New Town. For some reason these three towns happened to contain a considerable proportion of persons not fully in sympathy with the aims of Winthrop and Cotton and the other great leaders of the Puritan exodus. In the theocratic state which these leaders were attempting to found, one of the corner-stones, perhaps the chiefest corner-stone, was the restriction of the rights of voting and holding civil office to members of the Congregational Church qualified for participation in the Lord's Supper. The ruling party in Massachusetts Bay believed that this restriction was necessary in order to guard against hidden foes and to assure sufficient power to the clergy; but there were some who felt that the restriction would give to the clergy more power than was likely to be wisely used, and that its tendency was distinctly aristocratic. The minority which held these democratic views was more strongly represented in Dorchester, Watertown, and the New Town than elsewhere. Here, too, the jealousy of encroachments upon local self-government was especially strong, as illustrated in the protest of Watertown above mentioned. It is also a significant fact that in 1633

to carry on the work of government by discussion. But our forefathers under King Alfred, a thousand years ago, were familiar with a device which it had never entered into the mind of Greek or Roman to conceive: they sent from each township a couple of esteemed men to be its representatives in the county court. Here was an institution that admitted of indefinite expansion. That old English county court is now seen to have been the parent of all modern popular legislatures." [This and the succeeding notes are quoted from an address delivered by Dr. Fiske, October 10, 1901, at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Middletown.]

Watertown and Dorchester led the way in instituting town government by selectmen.

In September, 1633, there arrived upon the scene several interesting men, three of whom call for special mention. These were John Haynes, Samuel Stone, and Thomas Hooker. Haynes was born in Copford Hall, Essex, but the date of his birth is unknown, and the same may be said of the details of his early life. He is now remembered as the first governor of Connecticut and as having served in that capacity every alternate year until his death. He has been described as a man "of large estate and larger affections; of heavenly mind and spotless life, sagacious, accurate, and dear to the people by his benevolent virtues and disinterested conduct." Samuel Stone was born in Hertford in 1602, and was graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1627, being already known as a shrewd and tough controversialist, abounding in genial humour and sometimes sparkling with wit. Thomas Hooker was an older man, having been born in Markfield, Leicestershire, in 1586. He was graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and afterward became a fellow of that College. In 1626 he was appointed assistant to a clergyman in Chelmsford and preached there, but in 1630 was forbidden to preach by Archbishop Laud. For a while Hooker stayed in his home near Chelmsford and taught a school in Little Braddon, where he had for an assistant teacher John Eliot, afterward famous as the apostle to the Indians. This lasted but a few months. Things were made so disagreeable for Hooker that before the end of 1630 he made his way to Holland and stayed there until 1633, preaching in Rotterdam and Delft.

At length, in the summer of 1633, he decided to go to New England and sailed in the good ship *Griffin*. In the same ship came Haynes and Stone, and upon their arrival in Massachusetts Bay all three established themselves at the New Town, which was soon to be called Cambridge. In the preceding year a congregation from Braintree in Essex had come over to Massachusetts and begun to settle near Mount Wollaston, where they left the name of Braintree on the map; but presently they removed to the New Town, where their accession raised the population to something like five hundred souls. Hooker, upon his arrival, was chosen pastor and Stone was chosen teacher of the New Town church.

During the ensuing year expressions of dissent from the prevailing policy began to be heard more distinctly than before in the New Town. Among the questions which then agitated the community was one which concerned the form which legislation should take. Many of the people expressed a wish that a code of laws might be drawn up, inasmuch as they naturally wished to know what was to be expected of law-abiding citizens; but the general disposition of the ministers was to withstand such requests and to keep things undecided until a body of law should grow up through the decisions of courts in which the ministers themselves played a leading part. The controversy over this question was kept up until 1647, when the popular party, if we may so call it, carried the day, and caused a code of law to be framed. This code, of which Nathaniel Ward was the draughtsman, was known as the Body of Liberties. In all this prolonged discussion the representative assembly was more or less

opposed by the council of assistants. In short, there was a very clear division in Massachusetts between what we may call the aristocratic and democratic parties. Perhaps it would also be correct to distinguish them as the theocratic and secular parties. On the one side were the clergymen and aristocrats who wished to make political power the monopoly of a few, while on the other hand a considerable minority of the people wished to secularize the politics of the community and place it upon a broader basis. The foremost spokesmen of these two parties were the two great ministers, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker. Both were men of force, sagacity, tact, and learning. They were probably the two most powerful intellects to be found on Massachusetts Bay. Their opinions were clearly expressed. Hooker said, "In matters of greater consequence, which concern the common good, a general council, chosen by all, to transact businesses which concern all, I conceive, under favour, most suitable to rule and most safe for relief of the whole." Here we have one of the fundamental theorems of democracy stated in admirably temperate language. On the other hand, Cotton said, "Democracy I do not conceive that ever God did ordain as a fit government either for church or commonwealth." Hooker also had more or less discussion with Winthrop, in which it appeared that the ideal of the former was government of the people by the people, while that of the latter was government of the people by a selected few.

Among the principal adherents of Hooker were John Warham, the pastor, and John Maverick, the teacher, of Dorchester, both of them natives of Exeter

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in Devonshire. There was also George Phillips, a graduate of Cambridge, who had since 1630 been pastor of the church at Watertown. Another adherent was Roger Ludlow of Dorchester, a brother-in-law of Endicott. Ludlow had been trained for the bar and was one of the most acute and learned of the Puritan settlers. The vicissitudes of his life might perhaps raise a suspicion that wherever there was a government, he was "agin it." At all events, he was conspicuous in opposition at the time of which we are speaking.

By 1635 many reports had come to Boston of the beautiful smiling fields along the Connecticut River. Attention had been called to the site of Hartford, because here the Dutch had built a rude blockhouse and exchanged defiances with boats from Plymouth coming up the river. At the river's mouth the Saybrook fort, lately founded, served to cut off the Dutch fortress of Good Hope from its supports on the Hudson River, and all the rest of what is now Connecticut was rough and shaggy woodland. All at once it appeared that in the congregations of Dorchester, Watertown, and the New Town, a strong desire had sprung up of migrating to the banks of the Connecticut. There was no unseemly controversy, as in the cases of Roger Williams and Mrs. Hutchinson. This case was not parallel to theirs, for Hooker was no heresiarch and Massachusetts was most anxious to keep him and his friends. To lose three large congregations would but aggravate its complaint of poverty in men. Moreover, antagonists like Hooker and Cotton knew how to be courteous. When the discontented congregations petitioned the General Court for leave to with-

draw from the neighbourhood, the reasons which they alleged were so ludicrous as to make it plain that they were merely set forth as pretexts to do duty instead of the real reasons. It was alleged, for example, that they had not room enough to pasture their cattle. The men who said this must have had to hold their sides to keep from bursting with laughter. Not enough room in Cambridge for five hundred people to feed their cattle! Why, then, did they not simply send a swarm into the adjacent territory, — into what was by and by to be parcelled out as Lexington and Concord and Acton? Why flit a hundred miles through the wilderness and seek an isolated position open to attack from many quarters? It is impossible to read the fragmentary records without seeing that the weighty questions were kept back; but there is one telltale fact which is worth reams of written description. In the state which these men went away and founded on the banks of our noble river there was no limitation of the suffrage to members of the churches. In words of perfect courtesy the ministers and magistrates of Boston deprecated the removal of a light-giving candlestick, but the candlestick could not be prevailed on to stay, and the leave so persistently sought was reluctantly granted.

A wholesale migration ensued. About eight hundred persons made their way through the forest to their new homes on the farther bank of the Connecticut River. The Dorchester congregation made the settlement which they called at first by the same name, but presently changed it to Windsor. The men from Watertown built a new Watertown lower down, which was presently rechristened Wethersfield; and between them

the congregation from the New Town, led by its pastor and teacher, halted near the Dutch fort and called their settlement Hartford, after Stone's English birthplace. About half of the migration seems to have come to Hartford, and the wholesale character of it may be best appreciated when we learn that of the five hundred inhabitants of Cambridge at the beginning of the year, only fifty were left at the end of it. Truly, our good city on the Charles was well-nigh depopulated. A great many empty houses would have been consigned to decay but for one happy circumstance. Just as Hooker's people were leaving, a new congregation from England was arriving. These were the learned Thomas Shepard and his people. They needed homes, of course, and the houses of the seceders were to be had at reasonable prices. I cannot refrain from mentioning, before taking my departure from this part of the subject with the seceders, that Shepard's people were much more in harmony with the Massachusetts theocracy than their predecessors. Indeed, when in that very year it was decided that the colony must have a college, it was further decided to place it in the New Town where its students and professors might sit under the preaching of Mr. Shepard, a man so acute and diligent in detecting and eradicating heresy that it could by no possibility acquire headway in his neighbourhood. Thus Harvard College was founded by graduates of the ancient university on the Cam; and thus did the New Town at last acquire its name of Cambridge. But alas for human foresight! The first president that Harvard had was expelled from his place for teaching heresy, being neither more nor less than a disbeliever in the propriety of infant baptism!

At first the seceders said nothing about escaping from the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and indeed, the permission granted to the Watertown congregation expressly provided that in their new home they should remain a part of that commonwealth. What Hooker and his friends may have at first intended we do not really know. One thing is clear: they waited until their new homes were built before they took the great question of government in hand. At about the same time a party from Roxbury migrated westward and founded Springfield higher up the river. Their leader, William Pynchon, was more than once in very bad repute with the people of Boston; and some years later he published in London a treatise on the Atonement, which our Boston friends solemnly burned in the market-place by order of the General Court.

For a couple of years the affairs of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield were managed by a commission from Massachusetts in which William Pynchon and Roger Ludlow were the leading spirits. There was a difference in the position of Springfield and the three lower towns with reference to the government in Boston. The charter of the Massachusetts Company granted it a broad strip of land running indefinitely westward. With the imperfect geographical knowledge of that time and in the entire absence of surveys, it was possible for Massachusetts to claim Springfield as situated within her original grant. No such claim, however, was possible in the case of the three lower towns.<sup>1</sup> Latitude settled the business for them to the

<sup>1</sup> "The new towns, Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield, were indisputably outside of the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in so far as grants from the crown could go."

satisfaction of anybody who could use a sextant. If they chose to set up for themselves, Massachusetts could find no reasonable ground upon which to oppose them. Moreover, it was distinctly bad policy for Massachusetts to be too exigent in such a matter, or to make the Connecticut seceders her enemies. Massachusetts was playing a part of extraordinary boldness with reference to the British government. It took all the skill and resources of one of the most daring and sagacious statesmen that ever lived (and such John Winthrop certainly was) to steer that ship safely among the breakers that threatened her, and to quarrel with such worthy friends as the men of Connecticut, except for some most imperative and flagrant cause, would be the height of folly.

Thus left quite free to act for themselves, the three river towns almost from the beginning behaved as an independent community. In May, 1637, a legislature called a General Court was assembled at Hartford. A committee of three from each town, meeting at Hartford, elected six magistrates and administered to them an oath of office. The government thus established superseded the commission from Massachusetts, and it is worth noting that it derived its authority directly from the three towns. In the nine deputies we have the germ of the representative assembly, and in the six elected magistrates we have the analogue of the Massachusetts council of assistants.

The relations of the towns, however, needed better definition, and on the 14th of January, 1639, a convention met at Hartford which framed and adopted a written constitution, creating the commonwealth of Connecticut. The name of this written constitution

was "The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut."<sup>1</sup> These Orders, as already observed, placed no ecclesiastical restrictions upon the suffrage, but gave it to all admitted freemen who had taken the oath of fidelity to the commonwealth; and lest there should be any doubt who were to be regarded as admitted freemen, the General Court afterward declared that the phrase meant all who had been admitted by a town. From this it appears that in Connecticut the towns were the original sources of power, just as in our great federal republic the original sources of power are the states. It was perfectly well understood that each town was absolutely self-governing in all that related to its own local affairs, and that all powers not expressly conferred upon the General Court by these Fundamental Orders remained with the town. One express direction to the towns reminds one of the provision in our Federal Constitution that it shall guarantee to each state a republican form of government. In like manner the Fundamental Orders provide that each town shall choose a number of its inhabitants not exceeding seven to administer its affairs from year to year. With regard to the General Court, it was ordered that each town should send four deputies to represent it until the number of towns should so increase that this rule would make an assembly inconveniently large, in which case the num-

<sup>1</sup> "This was the first instance known to history in which a commonwealth was created in such a way. Much eloquence has been expended over the compact drawn up and signed by the Pilgrims in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, and that is certainly an admirable document; but it is not a constitution; it does not lay down the lines upon which a government is to be constructed. It is simply a promise to be good and to obey the laws. On the other hand, the 'Fundamental Orders of Connecticut' summon into existence a state government which is, with strict limitations, paramount over the local governments of the three towns. its creators."

ber for each town might be reduced. The noticeable feature is that the towns were to be equally represented, without regard to their population. This feature gives a distinctly federal character to this remarkable constitution. In the face of this fact it cannot well be denied that the original Connecticut was a federation of towns. A careful and detailed study of the history of the two states would further convince us that the town has always had more importance in Connecticut than in Massachusetts.

With regard to the governor, there was to be a system of popular election without any preliminary nomination. An election was to be held each year in the spring, at which every freeman was entitled to hand to the proper persons a paper containing the name of the person whom he desired for governor. The papers were then counted and the name which was found on the greatest number of ballots was declared elected. Here we have the popular election by a simple plurality vote. As for the six magistrates, the deputies from each town in the General Court might nominate two candidates, and the court as a whole might nominate as many more as it liked. This nomination was not to be acted upon until the next or some subsequent meeting of the Court. When the time came for choosing six, the secretary read the names of the candidates, and in the case of each candidate every freeman was to bring in a written ballot which signified a vote in his favour, and a blank ballot which was equivalent to a black-ball, and he who had more votes than black-balls was chosen.

Into the details of this constitution I need not go but may dismiss it with a few general remarks.

In the first place, *it was the first written constitution known to history that created a government.*

*Secondly, it makes no allusion to any sovereign beyond seas, nor to any source of authority whatever except the three towns themselves.*

*Thirdly, it created a state which was really a tiny federal republic, and it recognized the principle of federal equality by equality of representation among the towns, while at the same time it recognized popular sovereignty by electing its governor and its Upper House by a plurality vote.*

*Fourthly, let me repeat, it conferred upon the General Court only such powers as were expressly granted. In these peculiarities we may see how largely it served as a precedent for the Constitution of the United States.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> "This is not the place for inquiring into the origin of written constitutions. Their precursors in a certain sense were the charters of mediæval towns, and such documents as the Great Charter of 1215 by which the English sovereign was bound to respect sundry rights and liberties of his people. Our colonial charters were in a sense constitutions, and laws that infringed them could be set aside by the courts. By rare good fortune, aided by the consummate tact of the younger Winthrop, Connecticut obtained in 1662 such a charter, which confirmed her in the possession of her liberties. But these charters were always, in form at least, a grant of privileges from an overlord to a vassal, something given or bartered by a superior to an inferior. With the constitution which created Connecticut it was quite otherwise. You may read its eleven articles from beginning to end, and not learn from it that there was ever such a country as England or such a personage as the British sovereign. It is purely a contract, in accordance with which we the people of these three river towns propose to conduct our public affairs. Here is the form of government which commends itself to our judgment, and we hereby agree to obey it while we reserve the right to amend it. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, this document contains no theoretical phrases about liberty and equality, and it is all the more impressive for their absence. It does not deem it necessary to insist upon political freedom and upon equality before the law, but it takes them for granted and proceeds at once to business. Surely



But it was not only in the league of the three river towns that the principles of town autonomy and federation were asserted. Let us turn aside for a moment and consider some of the circumstances under which the sister colony of New Haven was founded. The headlong overthrow of the Pequots in the spring of 1637 and the pursuit of the fugitive remnant of the tribe had made New England settlers acquainted with the beautiful shores of Long Island Sound. Just at that time a new company arrived in Boston from England. The general purpose of these newcomers was nearly identical with that of the magistrates in Boston. They desired a theocratic government of aristocratic type in which the clergy and magistrates should possess the chief share of power, and they also, like the Boston clergy, were unwilling for the present to concede a definite code of laws. Why, then, did not this new party remain in the neighbourhood of Boston? They would have done much toward healing that complaint of poverty in men of which John Cotton spoke; and one would suppose moreover that after having recently suffered from so large a secession as that which founded the three river towns of Connecticut the Boston people would have been over-anxious to retain these newcomers in their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it was amicably arranged that the new party, of which John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton were the leaders, should try its fortunes on the coast of Long Island Sound. Massachusetts colony of course had no authority to restrain them. If they chose to go outside the limits of the Massachusetts this was the true birth of American democracy, and the Connecticut Valley was its birthplace!"

charter and thus be free at once from its restrictions and its protection, it was open to them to do so. What could have been their motive? The records of the time leave us in some doubt, but I suspect that they found the minority in Massachusetts too troublesome. There was a very considerable minority which disapproved of the theocratic policy, and although it had been weakened by the departure of the Connecticut men, yet it still remained troublesome and grew more so from year to year until after two generations it contributed to the violent overthrow of the Massachusetts charter. In the summer of 1637 the air of Boston was dense with complaints of theological and political strife, and one may believe that the autocratic Davenport preferred to try his fortunes in a new and untried direction. Not only was the Old World given over to the Man of Sin, but that uncomfortable personage had even allowed his claws and tail to make an appearance among the saints of Boston.

For such reasons, doubtless, the Davenport party came into the Sound and chose for their settlement the charming bay of Quinnipiac. They called their settlement New Haven, with a double meaning, as commemorating old English associations and as an earnest of the spiritual rest which they hoped to secure. In the course of the years 1638 and 1639 settlements were also made at Milford and Guilford and in 1640 at Stamford. Somewhat later the towns of Bramford and Southold on Long Island were added.<sup>1</sup>


<sup>1</sup> "In the eventful year 1639, Roger Ludlow, of Windsor, led a swarm to Fairfield, the settlement of which was soon followed by that of Stratford at the mouth of the Housatonic River. This forward movement separated Stamford from its sister towns of the New Haven republic. Then in 1644 Connecticut bought Saybrook from the representatives of the grantees, Lord

Now these infant towns did not at the first moment form themselves into a commonwealth, but they retained each its autonomy like the towns of ancient Greece, and each of these independent towns was little else than an independent congregation. All over New England the town was practically equivalent to the parish. In point of fact it was the English parish brought across the ocean and self-governing, without any subjection to a bishop. But nowhere perhaps was the identification of Church and State in the affairs of the town so complete as in these little communities on the banks of the Sound. In June of 1639, less than half a year after the constitution of Connecticut, the planters of New Haven held a meeting in Robert Newman's lately finished barn, and agreed upon a constitution for New Haven. Mr. Davenport began by preaching a sermon from the text "Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars." After the sermon six fundamental orders were submitted to the meeting and adopted by a show of hands. The general purport of these orders was that only church members could vote and hold office. Even in that gathering of saints such a rule would disfranchise many, and it was not adopted without some opposition. It was then provided that all the freemen (that is, church members) should

Saye and his friends, and in the next year a colony planted at the mouth of Pequot River was afterward called New London, and the name of the river was changed to Thames. Apparently Connecticut had an eye to the main chance, or, in modern parlance, to the keys of empire; at all events, she had no notion of being debarred from access to salt water, and while she seized the mouths of the three great rivers, she claimed the inheritance of the Pequots, including all the lands where that domineering tribe had ever exacted tribute."

choose twelve of their number as electors, and that these twelve should choose the seven magistrates who were to administer the affairs of the settlement. These magistrates were really equivalent to selectmen; they were known as pillars of the church. It was furthermore agreed that the Holy Scriptures contain perfect rules for the ordering of all affairs civil and domestic as well as ecclesiastical. So far was this principle applied that New Haven refused to have trial by jury because no such thing could be found in the Mosaic law. The assembling of freemen for an annual election was simply the meeting of church members to choose the twelve electors, while the rest of the people had nothing to say. It was therefore as far as possible from the system adopted by the three river towns. The constitution of Connecticut was democratic, that of New Haven aristocratic. Connecticut, moreover, at its beginning was a federation of towns; New Haven at its beginning was simply a group of towns juxtaposed but not confederated.

Nevertheless, circumstances soon drove the New Haven towns into federation, and here for a moment let us pause to consider how federation was inevitably involved in this whole process which we have been considering. We have seen that the principal reason why New England did not develop into a single solid state like Virginia or Pennsylvania, but into a congeries of scattered communities, was to be found in the slight but obstinate differences between different parties of settlers on questions mainly of church polity, sometimes of doctrine; and we must remember that the isolation of these communities was greater than we can easily realize, because our minds are liable to be



confused by the consolidation that has come since. There were three or four towns on the Piscataqua as a beginning for New Hampshire; there were ten or twelve towns about Boston harbour; two or three in Plymouth colony; two or three more on Rhode Island besides Roger Williams's plantation at Providence, and presently Gorton's at Warwick; then there was a lonely fortress at Saybrook; and lastly, the federation of Connecticut and the scattered molecules of New Haven. The first result of so much dispersal had been a deadly war with the Indians, and although the annihilation of the Pequots served as a dreadful warning to all red men, yet danger was everywhere so imminent as to make some kind of union necessary for bringing out in case of need the military strength of these scattered communities. Thus arose the famous New England confederation of 1643, in which Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven united their fortunes.<sup>1</sup> Now when the question of forming this federation came up, New Haven could not very well afford to be left out. She possessed only the territory which she had bought from the Indians, while Connecticut, with an audacity like that of old world empires, claimed every rood of land the occupants of which had ever paid tribute to the extin-

<sup>1</sup> "This act of sovereignty was undertaken without any consultation with the British government or any reference to it. The Confederacy received a serious blow in 1662, when Charles II. annexed New Haven, without its consent, to Connecticut; but it had a most useful career still before it, for without the aid of a single British regiment or a single gold piece from the Stuart treasury, it carried New England through the frightful ordeal of King Philip's War, and came to an honoured end when it was forcibly displaced by the arbitrary rule of Andros. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this New England federation as a preparatory training for the greater work of federation a century later."

guished Pequots. She was laying one finger upon the Thames River and another upon the Housatonic, while she sent parties of settlers to Fairfield and Stratford, thus curtailing and invading New Haven's natural limits. "In union there is strength," and so the towns of the New Haven colony united themselves into a little federal republic.

I need not pursue this subject, for I have said enough to indicate the points which concern us to-day. Let me only mention one interesting feature of the events which annexed aristocratic New Haven to her democratic neighbour. When I say aristocratic New Haven, I am not thinking of dress and furniture and worldly riches; yet it was a matter of comment that the New Haven leaders were wealthy, that panelled wainscots and costly rugs and curtains were seen in their houses when there was as yet nothing of that sort to be found in the three river towns, and that they were inclined to plume themselves upon possessing the visible refinements of life. The policy of their theocracy toward the British crown was very bold, like that of Massachusetts, but it was imprudent inasmuch as they were far from having the strength of the older colony. It is a thrilling story, that of the hunt for the regicides, and Davenport's defiant sermon on the occasion. It was magnificent, but it was not diplomacy. On the other hand, the policy of Connecticut at that time was shaped by a remarkable man, no less than John Winthrop, son of the great founder of Massachusetts, a man of vast accomplishments, scientific and literary, a fellow of the Royal Society. Inheriting much of his father's combination of audacity with velvet tact, he knew at once how to maintain the rights and claims of Connecticut and how to make

Charles II. think him the best fellow in the world. We have seen that in making her first constitution Connecticut did not so much as allude to the existence of a British government; but in the stormy times of the Restoration that sort of thing would no longer do. So the astute Winthrop sought and obtained a royal charter which simply gave Connecticut what she had already, namely, the government which she had formed for herself, and which was so satisfactorily republican that she did not need to revise it in 1776, but lived on with it well into the nineteenth century. This charter defined her territory in such a way as to include naughty New Haven, which was thus summarily annexed. And how did New Haven receive this? The disfranchised minority hailed the news with delight. The disgruntled theocrats in great part migrated to New Jersey, and the venerable Davenport went to end his days in Boston. Between New Haven and Boston the sympathy had always been strong. The junction with Connecticut was greatly facilitated by the exodus of malcontents to New Jersey, and it was not long before the whole of what is now Connecticut had grown together as an extensive republic composed of towns whose union presented in many respects a miniature model of our present great federal commonwealth.

We may now in conclusion point to the part which Connecticut played in the formation of the federal constitution under which we live. You will remember that there was strong opposition to such a constitution in most of the states. Everywhere there was a lurking dread of what might be done by a new and untried continental power, possessing powers of taxation and having a jurisdiction beyond and in some respects

above those of the separate thirteen states. You will remember that the year 1786 was one in which civil war was threatened in many quarters, and something approaching civil war actually existed in Massachusetts. The opposition between North and South was feeble compared to what it afterward became, yet there was real danger that the Kentucky settlements would secede from the Union and be followed by the Southern states. The jealousy between large and small states was more bitter than it is now possible for us to realize. War seemed not unlikely between New York and New Hampshire, and actually imminent between New York and her two neighbours, Connecticut and New Jersey. It was in a solemn mood that our statesmen assembled in Philadelphia, and the first question to be settled, one that must be settled before any further work could be done, was the way in which power was to be shared between the states and the general government.

It was agreed that there should be two houses in the federal legislature, and Virginia, whose statesmen, led by George Washington and James Madison, were taking the lead in the constructive work of the moment, insisted that both houses should represent population. To this the large states assented; while the small states, led by New Jersey, would have nothing of the sort, but insisted that representation in the federal legislature should be only by states. Such an arrangement would have left things very much as they were under the old federation. It would have left Congress a mere diplomatic body representing a league of sovereign states. If such were to be the outcome of the combination, it might as well not have met.



The bitterness and fierceness of the controversy was extreme. Gunning Bedford of Delaware exclaimed to the men of whom James Madison was the leader: "Gentlemen, I do not trust you. If you possess the power, the abuse of it could not be checked; and what then would prevent you from exercising it to our destruction? Sooner than be ruined, there are foreign powers who will take us by the hand." When talk of this sort could be indulged in, it was clear that the situation had become dangerous. The convention was on the verge of breaking up, and the members were thinking of going home, their minds clouded and their hearts rent at the imminency of civil strife, when a compromise was suggested by Oliver Ellsworth of Windsor, Roger Sherman of New Haven, and William Samuel Johnson of Stratford, — three immortal names. These men represented Connecticut, the state which for a hundred and fifty years had been familiar with the harmonious coöperation of the federal and national principles. In the election of her governor Connecticut was a little nation; in the election of her assembly she was a little confederation. However the case may stand under the altered conditions of the present time, Connecticut had in those days no reason to be dissatisfied with the working of her government. Her delegates suggested that the same twofold principle should be applied on a continental scale in the new constitution: let the national principle prevail in the House of Representatives and the federal principle in the Senate.

This happy thought was greeted with approval by the wise old head of Franklin, but the delegates obstinately wrangled over it until, when the question

of equality of suffrage in the Senate was put to vote, the compromise went to the verge of defeat. The result was a tie. Had the vote of Georgia been given in the negative, it would have defeated the compromise; but this catastrophe was prevented by the youthful Abraham Baldwin, a native of Guilford and lately a tutor in Yale College, who had recently emigrated to Georgia. Baldwin was not convinced of the desirableness of the compromise, but he felt that its defeat was likely to bring about that worst of calamities, the breaking up of the convention. He prevented such a calamity by voting for the compromise contrary to his colleague, whereby the vote of Georgia was divided and lost.

Thus it was that at one of the most critical moments of our country's existence the sons of Connecticut played a decisive part and made it possible for the framework of our national government to be completed. When we consider this noble climax and the memorable beginnings which led up to it, when we also reflect the mighty part which federalism is unquestionably destined to play in the future, we shall be convinced that there is no state in our Union whose history will better repay careful study than Connecticut. Surely few incidents are better worth turning over and over and surveying from all possible points of view than the framing of a little confederation of river towns at Hartford in January, 1639.



**V**

**THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE  
BOSTON TEA PARTY**



## V

### THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

It may be one of the symptoms of a wholesome reaction against the vapid Fourth of July rhetoric of the past generation that writers of our own day sometimes betray a tendency to belittle the events of the Revolutionary period. The smoke of that conflict is so far cleared away as to enable us to see that sometimes the popular leaders did things that were clearly wrong; we find, too, that all the Tories were not quite so black as they have been painted; and from such discoveries a reaction of feeling more or less extensive naturally arises. In the case of many scholars born and bred in the neighbourhood of Boston such a reaction has within the last few years been especially strong and marked. The immediate cause has doubtless been the publication of the Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson, the last royal governor of Massachusetts.

In such waves of feeling there is apt to be a lack of discrimination; bad things get praised along with the good, and good things get blamed along with the bad. An instance is furnished by an essay on "Boston Mobs before the Revolution," by the late Andrew Preston Peabody, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1888. This interesting paper was called forth by the act of the Massachusetts legislature in voting a civic monument to Crispus Attucks and the

other victims of the affray in King Street, commonly known as the "Boston Massacre." What we have to note especially in the paper is the fact that it expressly includes the Boston Tea Party among the reprehensible riots of the time, and discerns no difference between its performance and the sacking of private houses by drunken ruffians. Furthermore, says Dr. Peabody, "the illegal seizure of the tea was in a certain sense parallel to the (so-called) respectable mob that in the infancy of the antislavery movement nearly killed Garrison, and made the jail his only safe place of refuge." This comparison makes Dr. Peabody's view sufficiently explicit.

In connection with the same affair of the Attucks monument, one of the most eminent historical scholars of Boston, Mr. Abner C. Goodell, in the course of a letter to the *Boston Advertiser*, said: "If the only lesson that the popular mind has derived from the disorderly doings which preceded the Revolution is that they were the right things to be done and worthy of perpetual applause, it is high time that we adopt a rule never to mention such events as the affray in King Street and the destruction of the tea without expressions of unqualified disapprobation. Which of us would permit his sons to engage in such reprehensible proceedings to-day?" This, again, is sufficiently explicit. The act of the Tea Party is unreservedly condemned, and no consciousness is indicated of the points in which it differed from a chance affray.

It would not be right to leave these expressions of opinion without further reference to the time when they were written. Extensive strikes, especially of men employed on railroads, and accompanied with savage attempts at boycotting, had recently occurred

in St. Louis and other great cities, and something of the sort had been seen under the very shadow of Harvard's elms in Cambridge. Both Dr. Peabody and Mr. Goodell make express mention of these recent disturbances, and either assert or imply that approval of any of the irregular acts in Boston which preceded the Revolution is equivalent to approval of modern boycotting with all its attendant outrages. Now, if there is any one source of confusion against which the student of history needs to be eternally vigilant, it is the tendency to argue from loose or false analogies. Every one remembers how Mr. Mitford, some seventy years ago, wrote a History of Ancient Greece under the influence of his dread of the approaching reform of Parliament, and a precious mess he made of it. In his eyes the one thing the Athenians had done for mankind was to give it an object lesson in the evils of democracy. Very little insight into history is gained by studying it in this way; vague generalizations are grossly misleading; real knowledge is attained only when the events of a period are studied in their causal relations to one another amid all their concrete complexity. It is this which makes the study of history, rightly pursued, such a superb discipline for the intellectual powers. It is this which enables us to reach conclusions which have the force of reasoned convictions. There is something rather comical in the spectacle of a writer whose verdicts upon past events are at the mercy of the next ragamuffin who may throw a bomb in Chicago or set fire to a barn in Vermont.


The opinions here quoted seem to show that in the current notions concerning the immediate causes of the American Revolution there is too much vague generali-



zation, with a very inadequate grasp of the situation in its definite and concrete details. It is worth our while, then, to approach once more the well-worn theme, and see if it is not possible to make a statement which shall be at once historically true and fair to all parties concerned.

First, we must note the fundamental fact out of which the American Revolution took its rise. A revolution need not necessarily have arisen from such a fact, but it did. The fundamental fact was the need for a continental revenue, whereas no such thing existed as a continental government with taxing power. This need was vividly brought out by seventy years of war with France. At the time of the treaty of Paris, in 1763, the need for a permanent continental government with taxing power had long been forcibly shown, though people were everywhere obstinately unwilling to admit the fact. For seventy-four years the colonies had been in a condition varying from armed truce to open warfare with France. The struggle began in 1689, when the Dutch stadtholder became king of Great Britain, when Andros was overthrown at Boston, and Leisler seized the government of New York, and Frontenac was sent over to Canada with vast designs. Occasionally this struggle came to a pause, but it was never really ended till, in 1763, France lost every rood of land she had ever possessed in North America. At first it was only the New England colonies and New York that were directly concerned, and in Leisler's Congress of 1690 no colony south of Maryland was represented. But by the time when Robert Dinwiddie ruled in Virginia all the colonies came to be involved, and the war in its latest stage assumed continental dimensions. Regular troops

from Great Britain assisted the colonies and were supported by the imperial exchequer. The colonies contributed men and money to the cause, as it was right they should; and here the need of a continental taxing power soon made itself disastrously felt. The drift of circumstances had brought the thirteen colonies into the presence of what we may call a continental state of things, but nowhere was there any single hand that could take a continental grasp of the situation. There were thirteen separate governors to ask for money and thirteen distinct legislatures to grant it. Under these circumstances the least troublesome fact was that the colonies remote from the seat of danger for the moment did not contribute their fair share. Usually the case was worse than this. It often happened that the legislature of a colony immediately threatened with invasion would refuse to make its grant unless it could wring some concession from the governor in return. Thus, in Pennsylvania, there was the burning question as to taxing the proprietary lands, and more than once, while firebrand and tomahawk were busy on the frontier, did the legislature sit quietly at Philadelphia, seeking to use the public distress as a tool with which to force the governor into submission. It is an old story how it proved impossible to get horses for the expedition against Fort Duquesne until Benjamin Franklin sent around to the farmers and pledged his personal credit for them. Sometimes the case was even worse, as in 1764, when Pontiac's confederates were wreaking such havoc in the Alleghanies, and Connecticut did not feel sufficient interest in the woes of Pennsylvania to send them assistance. Such lamentable want of coöperation and promptness often gave advantages to the enemy



which neutralized their immense and permanent disadvantages of fighting on exterior lines.

The royal governors all understood these things, and felt them keenly. As a rule they were honourable men, with a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare of their provinces. They saw clearly that, to bring out the military resources of the country, some kind of continental government with taxing powers was needed.

Any such continental government was regarded by the people with fear and loathing. The sentiment of union between colonies had not come into existence, the feeling of local independence was intense and jealous, and a continental government was an unknown and untried horror. So late as 1788, when grim necessity had driven the people of the United States to adopt our present Constitution as the alternative to anarchy, it was with shivering dread that most of them accepted the situation. A quarter of a century earlier the repugnance was much stronger.

It should never be lost sight of that the difficulty with which the royal governors had to contend in the days of the French War was exactly the same difficulty with which the Continental Congress had to contend throughout the War of Independence and the critical period that followed it. We cannot understand American history until this fact has become part of our permanent mental structure. The difficulty was exactly the same; it was the absence of a continental government with taxing power. The Continental Congress had no such power; it could only ask the state legislatures for money, just as the royal governors had done, and if it took a state three years to raise what was

sorely needed within three months, there was no help for it. Hence the slowness and feebleness with which the War of Independence was conducted. When the Congress asked for an army of ninety thousand men for the year 1777, the demand was moderate and could have been met without a greater strain than was cheerfully borne during our Civil War; but the army furnished in response never reached thirty thousand, and the following years made even a poorer show. Our statesmen were then learning by hard experience exactly what the royal governors had learned before,—that work of continental dimensions, such as a great foreign war, required a continental government to conduct it, and that no government is worthy of the name unless it can raise money by taxation. After the peace of 1783 our statesmen were soon taught by abundant and ugly symptoms that in the absence of such a government the states were in imminent danger of falling apart and coming to blows with each other. It was only this greater dread that drove our people to do most reluctantly in 1788 what they had scornfully refused to do in 1754, and consent to the establishment of a continental government with taxing power. Let us not forget, then, that from first to last the difficulty was one and the same.

If we had surmounted the difficulty in 1754, the separation from Great Britain might perhaps not have occurred at all. In that year the prospect of an immediate renewal of war with France made it necessary to confer with the chiefs of the Six Nations, and in the congress that assembled at Albany Benjamin Franklin proposed a plan which, had it been adopted, would doubtless have surmounted the difficulty. It

would have created a federal government, with power of taxation for federal purposes, with local rights fully guaranteed, and with a president or governor-general appointed by the crown. The royal governors of course approved the plan, the people treated it with indignant contempt; the difficulty was acutely felt all through the war, and then the British Parliament, in a perfectly friendly spirit, tried to mend matters.

The necessity for a continental revenue continued, and always would continue. Scarcely had peace been made with France when Pontiac's terrible war broke out and furnished fresh illustrations of the perennial difficulty. Since the Americans would not create a continental taxing power for themselves, Parliament must undertake to supply the place of such a power. The failure of Franklin's plan of union seemed to force this work upon Parliament; certainly there was no other body that could raise money for the requisite continental purposes.

But when Parliament undertook such a step it ventured upon an untrodden field. No Parliament had ever raised money in America by direct taxation. As for port duties the Americans had not actually resisted them. As for parliamentary legislation, in the very few instances in which it had been attempted, as for example in the case of the Massachusetts Land Bank of 1740, the colonists had submitted with an exceedingly ill grace, as much as to say, "You had better not try it again!" According to the theory prevalent in the colonies and soon to be stated in print by Thomas Jefferson, they owed allegiance to the king but not to Parliament. The relation was like that of Hanover to Great Britain at that time, or like that of Norway

to Sweden at the present day, with one and the same king but separate and independent legislatures. On this theory the Americans had practically lived most of the time. But this point British statesmen and the British people did not realize. In their minds Parliament was the supreme body at home; even the king wore his crown by act of Parliament; in the empire at large there must be supreme authority somewhere, and as it clearly was not in the king, it must be in Parliament.

Accordingly, when George Grenville became prime minister, just as Pontiac's war was breaking out, he saw no harm in raising an American revenue for continental purposes by act of Parliament. Grenville cared little for theories of government; he was a man of business and liked to have things done promptly and in a shipshape manner. He was willing to have the Americans raise the revenue themselves; only if they wouldn't do it, he would; there must be no more shilly-shallying. What would be the least annoying kind of tax for the purpose? Doubtless a stamp tax. William Shirley, the very popular royal governor of Massachusetts, had said so ten years before, and there seemed to be reason in it. A stamp tax involves no awkward questions about private property and incomes, puts no premium upon lying, and entails as little expense as possible in its collection. Moreover, it cannot be evaded, and the proceeds all go into the treasury. So Grenville got his Stamp Act ready, but with commendable prudence and courtesy he gave the Americans a year's notice in advance, so that if they had anything better to suggest it might be duly considered.


The Americans had no alternative to suggest except a system of requisitions, — in other words, asking the thirteen separate legislatures to vote supplies. With that system they had floundered along for three-quarters of a century, and with it they were to flounder for a quarter of a century more until their eyes should be opened. Grenville was tired of so much floundering, and so he brought in his Stamp Act, about which one of the most notable things is that Parliament passed it with scarcely a word of debate. There was no unfriendly intent in the measure. It was not designed to take money from American pockets for British purposes. Every penny was to be used in America for the defence of the colonies. Some of the stamps, indeed, were higher in price than they need have been, but on the whole there was little in the Stamp Act for the Americans to object to except to the principle upon which the whole thing was based. On that point Parliament was not sufficiently awake, though some demonstrations had already been made in America and such men as Hutchinson had warned Grenville of the danger.

When it was known in America that the Stamp Act had become law, the resistance took two forms: there was mob violence, and there was the sober appeal to reason. From the outset the law was nullified; people simply would not touch the stamps or have anything to do with them. The story of the riots in New York and Boston needs no repetition, but one of the disgraceful scenes in Boston calls for mention in order to point the contrast which we shall have to make hereafter. Thomas Hutchinson, the foremost scholar of his time in America and the foremost writer,

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except Franklin, was then chief justice of Massachusetts. Some people believed him to have instigated the Stamp Act, which he had really opposed ; others, without due foundation, suspected him of having informed against sundry respectable citizens as smugglers. So one night in August, 1765, a drunken mob sacked his house, destroyed his furniture and pictures, and ruined his splendid library. This affair was typical of riots in general. It started at the suggestion of some unknown ruffian, its fury fell chiefly upon an innocent person, and its sole achievement was the wanton destruction of valuable property. It was an event in the history of crime, and belongs among such incidents as fill the Newgate Calendar. How did the people of Massachusetts treat this affair? Town-meetings all over the province condemned it in the strongest terms ; the leaders of the mob were thrown into prison, and the legislature promptly indemnified Hutchinson for his losses so far as money could repair them. The whole story shows that Massachusetts had no fondness for riots and rioters.

Besides such cases of mob violence there was the sober appeal to reason, and the American case was for the first time distinctly and fully stated. The principle of "no taxation without representation" was clearly set forth by Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams, and was incorporated in the resolutions adopted by the congress at New York. This was the formal answer of the Americans to Parliament. When it reached that body, it found George Grenville in opposition. Lord Rockingham had become Prime Minister, and a bill was brought in for the repeal of the Stamp Act. That measure had been passed almost without ques-






tion, but its repeal was the occasion of a debate that lasted nearly all winter. For the first time the constitutional relations of the colonies to the imperial government were thoroughly discussed, and three distinct views found expression: 1. The Tories held that the Stamp Act was all right and ought to be enforced. 2. The New Whigs, represented by William Pitt, accepted the American doctrine of no taxation without representation, and urged that the Stamp Act should be repealed expressly as founded upon an erroneous principle. 3. The Old Whigs, represented by Fox and Burke, refrained from committing themselves to such a doctrine, but considered it bad statesmanship to insist upon a measure which public opinion in America unanimously condemned. This third view prevailed, and the Stamp Act was repealed, while a Declaratory Resolve asserted the constitutional right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies in any way it might see fit.


This result was rightly regarded as a practical victory for the Americans, but it gave general satisfaction in England, for it seemed to remove a source of dispute that had most suddenly and unexpectedly loomed up in alarming proportions. The rejoicings in London were no less hearty than in New York. The affair had been creditably conducted. The dangerous question had been argued on broad, statesmanlike grounds, and the undue claims of Parliament had been virtually relinquished. It is true, the difficulty in America as to how that continental revenue was to be raised was left untouched. But friendly discussion might at length find a cure, or the question might be allowed to drop until some more favourable moment.

A situation, however, was arising which would soon put an end to friendly discussion, and which would neither let the question drop nor deal with it fairly. It is a pity that great political questions could not more often be argued in an atmosphere of sweetness and light. Their solution would exhibit a kind and degree of sense such as the world is not yet familiar with. Suppose that in 1860 the Americans, north and south, could have discussed the whole slavery question without passion; and suppose that all the slaves had been set free, and their owners compensated at their full market value; how small would have been the cost in dollars and cents compared with the cost of the Civil War, to say nothing of the saving of life! Such a supposition seems grotesque, so great is the difference, in respect of foresight and self-control, between the human nature implied in it and that with which we are familiar. It is to be hoped that the slow modifications wrought by civilized life will by and by bring mankind to that stage of wisdom which now seems unattainable; but for many a weary year no doubt will still be seen the same old groping and stumbling, the same old self-defeating selfishness.

In 1766 the questions connected with raising a continental revenue in America might have been carried along toward a peaceful settlement, had it been possible to keep them out of politics. But that was impossible. The discussion over the Stamp Act had dragged the American question into British politics, and there was one wily and restless politician who soon came to stake his very political existence upon its solution. That politician was the young king, George III., who was entering upon his long reign with an arduous problem before



his mind, how to break down cabinet government and parliamentary supremacy and convert the British state into a true monarchy. In order to carry out this purpose he relied chiefly upon a kind of corruption in which the chief element was the fact that the representation in the House of Commons had got quite out of gear with the population of the country. During more than two centuries the change from mediæval into modern England had come about without any redistribution of seats in that representative chamber. Some districts had been developing new trades and industries, while others had simply been overgrown with ivy and moss, until there had arisen that state of things so often quoted and described, in which Old Sarum without a human inhabitant had two members of Parliament, while Birmingham and Manchester had none. There were not less than a hundred rotten boroughs which ought to have been disfranchised without a moment's delay. They were for the most part implements of corruption, either bought up or otherwise controlled by leading Whig or Tory families, or by the king. For more than seventy years, ever since the expulsion of the Stuarts, this sort of corruption had been universally relied on in English politics. During that time the Tories had been mostly discredited because of the Jacobite element in their party. This was especially the case in the reigns of George I. and George II., each of which had its Jacobite rebellion to suppress. The Old Whig families were then all-powerful, the first two Georges were simply their wards, and under the long and epoch-making administration of Sir Robert Walpole the modern system of cabinet government was set quite firmly upon its feet. Under this



state of things with the elder Pitt for leader, England brought to a triumphant close a truly glorious war, one of the most important in which she had ever been engaged. Whenever it was needful for carrying a point in domestic or foreign policy, the great Whig leaders made free use of parliamentary corruption, though Pitt always proudly abstained from such methods. Much of the time a decisive vote in the Commons was thrown by members who were simply owned body and soul by the great Whig families.

When George III. came to the throne in 1760, a boy of eighteen years, he had learned to regard this state of things with a feeling which may fairly be described as one of choking rage. It was not the corruption that enraged him, but the subordination of the royal power. His aim in life, as defined from childhood, was to overthrow the Whig aristocracy and make himself a real monarch. There were two sets of circumstances which seemed to favour his ambition. In the first place, the disappearance of Jacobitism as an active political force brought the united Tory party to the support of the House of Hanover, so that there was a chance for the king to control a majority in Parliament. In the second place, the relations between the foremost political leaders happened to be such as to enable the king to frame a succession of short-lived and jarring ministries, thus bringing discredit upon cabinet government. Under such circumstances the young man was busily engaged in building up a party of personal adherents entirely dependent upon him as dispenser of patronage, when all at once the American question was thrown upon the stage in a way that alarmed him greatly.

For some years past there had been growing up in England a new party of Whigs very different from the country squires who so long had ruled the land. They represented the trades and industries of modern imperial England, they entertained many democratic ideas, and were disposed to be intolerant of ancient abuses. They saw that the whole body politic was poisoned by the rotten boroughs, and they knew that unless this source of corruption could be stopped there was an end of English freedom. Accordingly, in 1745 these New Whigs, under the lead of William Pitt, began the great agitation for Parliamentary Reform which only achieved its first grand triumph with Earl Grey and Lord John Russell in 1832. When the Stamp Act was repealed, in 1766, the question of Parliamentary Reform had been before the public for twenty-one years, and it largely determined the character of the speeches and votes upon that memorable occasion.

The resolutions of Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams and the New York congress asserted in the boldest language the principle of "no taxation without representation." That was one of the watchwords of the New Whigs, and hence Pitt in urging the repeal of the Stamp Act adopted the American position in full. None could deny that it was a fundamental and long-established principle of English liberty. It had been asserted by Simon de Montfort's Parliament in 1265; it had been expressly admitted by Edward I. in 1301; and since then it had never been directly impugned with success, though some kings had found ways of partially evading it, as, for instance, in the practice of benevolences which

grew up during the Wars of the Roses and was with difficulty suppressed in the seventeenth century. No Englishman could stand up and deny the principle of "no taxation without representation" without incurring the risk of being promptly refuted. Nevertheless the unreformed House of Commons had by slow stages arrived at a point where its very existence was a living denial of that principle. It was therefore impossible to separate the American case from the case of Parliamentary Reform; the very language in which the argument for Massachusetts and Virginia was couched involved also the argument for Birmingham and Manchester. Hence in the Stamp Act debate the Old Whigs, who were opposed to Parliamentary Reform, did not dare to adopt Pitt's position. That would have been suicidal; so they were obliged to urge the repeal of the Stamp Act simply upon grounds of general expediency.

The Old Whigs were opposed to reform because they felt that they needed the rotten boroughs in order to maintain control of Parliament. The king was opposed to reform for much the same reason. His schemes were based upon the hope of beating the Old Whigs at their own game, and securing by fair means or foul enough rotten boroughs to control Parliament for his own purposes. In this policy he had for a time much success. The reform of Parliament would be the death-blow to all such schemes. The king felt that it would be the ruin of all his political hopes; and this well-grounded fear possessed his half-crazy mind with all the overmastering force of a morbid fixed idea. Hence his ferocious hatred of the elder Pitt, and hence the savage temper in which after

1766 he thrust himself into American affairs. When once this desperate political gamester had entered the field, it was no longer possible for those affairs to be discussed reasonably or dealt with according to the merits of the case. In the king's mind it all reduced itself to this: on the Stamp Act question the Americans had won a victory. That was not to be endured. Somehow or other a fight must be forced again on the question of taxation, and the Americans must be compelled to eat their own words and surrender the principle in which they had so confidently intrenched themselves. This was the spirit in which the king took up the matter, and in it the original question as to raising a continental revenue for American purposes was quite lost sight of. There is nothing to show that the king cared a straw for the revenue; to snub and browbeat the Americans was all in all with him.

There was a certain kind of vulgar shrewdness in thus selecting the Americans as chief antagonists, for should their resistance tend to become rebellious, it would tend to array public opinion in England against them as disturbers of the peace, and would thus discredit the principle which they represented. Thus did this mischief-maker on the throne go to work to stir up bad feelings between two great branches of the English race.

Thus after 1766 the story of the causes of the American Revolution enters upon a new stage. In the earlier or Grenville stage a great public question was discussed on grounds of statesmanship, and the British government, having tried an impracticable solution, promptly withdrew it. No war need come

from that situation. . But in the second stage we see a desperate political schemer, to the neglect of public interests and in defiance of all sound statesmanship, pushing on a needless quarrel until it inevitably ends in war. This second stage we may call the Townshend-North stage.

It was a curious fortune that provided George III. with two such advisers as Charles Townshend and Frederick North. Both were brilliant and frivolous young men without much political principle; both were inclined to take public life as an excellent joke. North lived long enough to find it no joke; Townshend stayed upon the scene till he had perpetrated one colossal piece of mischief, and then died, leaving North to take the consequences. I do not believe Lord North would ever have originated such a measure as the Revenue Act of 1767; there was no malice in his nature, but in Townshend there was a strong vein of utterly reckless diablerie. Nobody could have been more willing to please the king by picking a quarrel with the Americans, and nobody knew better how to do it. Townshend was exceptionally well informed on American affairs, and sinned with his eyes wide open. In his case it will not do to talk about the blundering of the British ministers. Grenville had blundered, but Townshend's ingenuity was devoted to brushing every American hair the wrong way.

In the debates on the repeal of the Stamp Act the Americans had been charged with inconsistency in having allowed Parliament to tax them by means of port duties, while they refused to allow it to tax them by means of stamped paper. In reply the friends of



America had drawn a distinction between *external* and *internal* taxes, and had said that the Americans did not deny Parliament's right to tax them in the former case, but only in the latter case. The distinction was more ingenious than sound, and indeed the Americans had been guilty of inconsistency. They had at first tacitly assented to port duties because the nature of an indirect tax is not so quickly and distinctly realized as that of a direct tax, and so they had only gradually come to take in the full situation. But the acquiescence in port duties had been by no means unqualified. During all the reign of Charles II. the New England colonies had virtually defied the custom-house; in later times the activity of smugglers had reduced all tariff acts to a dead letter; and so lately as 1761 the resistance to general search warrants showed what might be expected when any rash ministry should endeavour to enforce such tariff acts. In short, it was perfectly clear that if pushed to a logical statement of their position, the Americans would deny the authority of Parliament from beginning to end. No one understood this better than Townshend when he now proceeded to lay a duty upon certain dried fruits, glass, painter's colours, paper, and tea.

With this continental revenue he proposed, of course, to keep up a small army for defending the frontier; but he also proposed other things. For more than half a century the various royal governors had tried to persuade the legislatures to vote them fixed salaries, but the legislatures, unwilling to give them too loose a tether, had obstinately refused to do more than make an annual grant which expired unless renewed by a

fresh grant. This was still one of the burning questions of American politics, and Townshend now proposed to settle it offhand by taking it out of the hands of the legislatures once for all. Henceforth the governors should be paid by the crown out of the revenues collected in America, and as if this were not enough, the judges should be paid in the same way. If after these expenses there should be any surplus remaining, it would be used for pensioning eminent American officials. In plain English it would be used as a corruption fund. Thus the British ministry assumed direct control over the internal administration of the American colonies, including even the courts of justice; under these circumstances it undertook to maintain an army, which might be employed against the people as readily as against Indians; and it actually had the impudence to demand of the Americans the money to support it in doing these things! To all this, said Townshend, with an evil twinkle in his eye, you Americans can't object, you know, for your friends say you are willing to submit to port duties. Then by way of an extra good sting he added a clause prohibiting the New York legislature from assembling for business of any sort until it should be prepared to yield to the British ministry in a measure for quartering troops that was intensely unpopular in New York.

In this way did Townshend gather into a single parcel all the obnoxious things he could think of, and hurl them at the heads of the Americans in this so-called Revenue Act. His own feeling about it was betrayed in his laughing remark as he went down with it to the House of Commons, "I suppose I

shall be dismissed for my pains ! ” Doubtless he never could have got it through the House without the aid of the rotten boroughs, and his victory was one of the first evil symptoms of the growing power of what we may call the royal machine. No doubt Townshend looked forward to some fine sport when once the king and the Americans were set by the ears ; but he had no sooner carried his measures than sudden death removed him from the scene, and Lord North took his place.

There never existed a self-respecting people that would not have resented and resisted such an outrageous measure as this pretended Revenue Act. Yet there was not much disturbance of the peace in America. All the ordinary machinery of argument and petition was used to no purpose. The measure of resistance in which all the colonies united in 1768 was an agreement to cease all commercial intercourse with Great Britain until the Revenue Act should be repealed. This agreement was to some extent evaded by traders more intent upon private gain than public policy, but on the whole it was remarkably well kept until the war came. Doubtless it seriously damaged and weakened the colonies, but it seemed the only kind of peaceful resistance that could be made.

Smuggling of course went on, and the seizure of one of John Hancock's ships for a false entry caused a riot in Boston in which one of the collector's boats was burned. This affair led the king to the dangerous step of sending troops to Boston, and the sacking of Hutchinson's house three years before was quoted to silence those members of Parliament who opposed this step. The troops stayed in Boston seventeen months,

and all that time their mere presence there was in gross violation of an act of Parliament. Our modern Tories, who hold up their hands in pious horror at every infraction of British-made law on the part of our forefathers, seem quite oblivious of the fact that according to British law these soldiers were mere trespassers in Boston. Their only legal abode was the Castle, on a small island in the harbour. They were kept in town under pretext of preserving order, but really to aid in enforcing the Revenue Act. That after seventeen months a slight scrimmage should have occurred, with the loss of half a dozen lives, was rather less than might have been expected. Next day the town-meeting ordered Hutchinson, who was then lieutenant-governor acting as governor, to remove all soldiery to the Castle, and Hutchinson promptly obeyed; he knew perfectly well that the law was on the side of the townspeople. I can imagine how that great Tory lawyer would have smiled at modern accounts of the King Street affray, in which a crowd of ruffians are depicted as wantonly assaulting the military guardians of law and order. Undoubtedly it was an affair of a mob; but it was such a scrimmage as indicated no special criminality on the part of either soldiers or citizens, and thus was a very different sort of thing from the wicked destruction of Hutchinson's house. I may add that the perfectly calm and honourable way in which the affair was handled by the courts is a sufficient comment upon the ludicrous notion that Boston was a disorderly town requiring an armed soldiery to keep the peace.

The sacking of Hutchinson's house, I say, and the chance affray on King Street were both cases of

mob law, yet it is only very loose thinking that would attempt to liken one case to the other. Our forefathers knew the difference: the Hutchinson malefactors they cast into jail, but the memory of the King Street victims they kept green for many a year by an annual oration in the Old South Meeting House, on the baleful effects of quartering soldiers among peaceful citizens in time of peace. We are now ready to consider the Tea Party, which by no stretch of definition can properly be included among cases of mob law. We are at length prepared to see just what the Tea Party was.


Early in 1770 Lord North made up his mind that the Revenue Act could not be enforced, and was a source of needless irritation, and he proposed to repeal it. But a full repeal would put things back where they were after the repeal of the Stamp Act, and even worse, for it would be a second victory for the Americans. The king could not afford to put such a weapon into the hands of the New Whigs; so it was decided to retain the duty on tea alone. In Parliament, certain Whigs objected that it would avail nothing to repeal the other duties, if that on tea were kept, since it was not revenue but principle that was at stake. Bless their simple hearts, the king knew all about that, and he kept the duty on tea, simply in order to force another fight on the question of principle. It was a question on which he was growing more and more fanatical, and nothing could prevail upon him to let it alone.

So for the next three years tea was the symbol with which the hostile spirits conjured. It stood for everything that true freemen loathe. In the deadly

tea-chest lurked the complete surrender of self-government, the payment of governors and judges by the crown, the arbitrary suppression of legislatures, the denial of the principle that freemen can be taxed only by their own representatives. So long as they were threatened with tea, the colonists would not break the non-intercourse agreement. Once the merchants of New York undertook to order from England various other articles than tea, and the news was greeted all over the country with such fury that nothing more of the sort was attempted openly. As for tea itself shipped from England, one would as soon have thought of trying to introduce the Black Death.

In the summer of 1772 the king tried to enforce the order that judges' salaries should be paid from the royal treasury. He was getting no revenue from America, but he would pay them out of the British revenues. He began with Massachusetts, and at once there was fierce excitement, which reverberated through all the colonies. The judges were forbidden under penalty of impeachment to touch the king's money, and so another year passed by and left George III. still baffled.

It was then that he hit upon his famous device for "trying the question" with America. This "trying the question" was his own phrase. It was observed that the Americans had more or less of tea to drink, though not an ounce was brought from England; whenever they solaced their nerves with the belligerent beverage, they smuggled it from Holland or the Dutch East Indies. The king, therefore, neatly arranged matters with the East India Company, so that it could afford to offer tea in American ports at




a price far below its market value; this tea, with the duty upon it, would cost American customers less than the tea smuggled from Holland, and in this way the Americans were to be ensnared into surrendering the great principle at issue.

Under these circumstances the sending of the East India Company's tea-ships to America was in no sense an incident of commerce. The king's arrangement with the Company deprived it of its commercial character. It was simply a political challenge. As Lord North openly confessed in the House of Commons, it was merely the king's method of "trying the question" with America. It was, moreover, an extremely insulting challenge. A grosser insult to any self-respecting people can hardly be imagined. It was King George's way of asking that perennial Boss Tweed question, "What are you going to do about it?" It was the most far-reaching political question that was raised in that age, for it involved the whole case of the relations of an imperial government to its colonies; a solemn question to be settled not by mobs, but by the sober and deliberate sense of the American people, and it was thus that it was settled in Boston once and forever.

Circumstances made Boston the battle-ground, and gave added point and concentrated meaning to everything that was done there. The royal challenge was aimed at the colonies as a whole, and ships were sent to New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, as well as to Boston. In all four towns consignees were appointed to receive the tea and dispose of it after paying the duty. But in the three former towns the consignees quailed before the wrath of the people,

resigned their commissions, and took oath that they would not act in the matter. So when the tea-ships at length arrived at New York and Philadelphia, they were turned about and sent home without ever coming within the jurisdiction of the custom-house. At Charleston the ships lingered more than the legal term of twenty days in port, and then the collector seized the tea and brought it ashore; but as there was no consignee at hand to pay the duty, the fragrant leaves lay untouched in the custom-house until they rotted and fell to pieces. But before these things happened, the battle had been fought in Boston. There the consignees, two of whom were sons of Governor Hutchinson, refused to resign; on no account, therefore, would it do to let the tea come ashore at Boston, for if it did, the duty would instantly be paid. The governor was a man of intense legality; he did not approve the sending of the tea, but if a ship once came into port, it must not, in his opinion, go out again without discharging all due formalities. His sons were like him for stubborn courage, and thus it was that Boston became the seat of war. With those two redoubtable Puritans, Thomas Hutchinson and Samuel Adams, pitted against each other, it was a meeting of Greek with Greek, and one might be sure that something dramatic and incisive would come of it.

In those stormy days the governor so often turned his legislature out of doors that it may be said to have been in a chronic state of dissolution. In order to transact public business on a large scale, the town-meetings appointed committees of correspondence, whereby town might confer with town and the sense of the whole commonwealth be thus ascertained. This





system, set in operation by Samuel Adams in 1772, was one of the strongest among the organizing forces that brought into existence the Federal Union. But my point now is that the action of these committees of correspondence expressed the deliberate sense of the commonwealth as truly as any act of legislature could have expressed it.

There is something eloquent and touching in the stained and yellow records of those old town-meetings. When it was known that the ships were coming, Boston asked advice of all the other towns. "Brethren, we are reduced to this dilemma, either to sit down quiet under this and every other burden that our enemies shall see fit to lay upon us, or to rise up and resist this and every plan laid for our destruction, as becomes wise freemen. In this extremity we earnestly request your advice."

Some of the replies from the mountain villages are worth recording. The farmers of Lenox said, "As we are in a remote wilderness corner of the earth, we know but little; but neither nature nor the God of nature requireth us to crouch, Issachar-like, between the two burdens of poverty and slavery." The farmers of Petersham were concerned to think of the risk that Boston was assuming, exposed as she was to the fire of a British fleet. "The time may come," they said, "when you may be driven from your goodly heritage; if that should be the case, we invite you to share with us in our small supplies of the necessaries of life, and should we still not be able to withstand, we are determined to retire and seek repose amongst the inland aboriginal natives, with whom we doubt not but to find more humanity and brotherly love than

we have lately received from our mother country." The Boston committee replied, "We join with the town of Petersham in preferring a life among savages to the most splendid condition of slavery; but Heaven will bless the united efforts of a brave people."

From every town in Massachusetts came instructions that on no account whatever must the tea be allowed to come ashore. Similar advice came in from the other colonies. The action of the Boston consignees in refusing to resign had fixed the eyes of the whole country upon that town. It was rightly felt that the weal or woe of America depended upon the action of the people there. If through any weakness of Boston a single ounce of tea should be landed, there was a widespread feeling that the chief bond of union between the colonies would be snapped. Hence the cordial letter from Philadelphia said: "Our only fear is that you may shrink. May God give you virtue enough to save the liberties of your country." The advice that thus came from all quarters was absolutely unanimous. When the tea-ships arrived late in November in Boston harbour, they were taken in charge by the committees of Boston, Cambridge, Charlestown, Roxbury, and Dorchester, and a military guard was placed over them. From that time forth until the end not a step was taken save under the direction of these five committees, to whose action a consistent unity was given by the prudent leadership of Samuel Adams, while in all that they did they felt that in the sight of the whole country they were discharging a sacred duty. Truly for an instance of mob law this Tea Party was somewhat conscientiously and prayerfully prepared!

There were just twenty days in which to try all legal measures for sending away the ships without landing the tea, but legal measures failed because one side was as stubborn as the other. After the ships had once come above the Castle, they could not go out again without the regular clearance from the collector of the port, or else a special pass from the governor. But the collector manœuvred and wore away the time without granting a clearance. For nineteen days and nights the people's guard patrolled the wharves, sentinels watched from the church belfries, the tar barrels on Beacon Hill were kept ready for lighting, and any attempt at landing the tea forcibly would have been met by an instant uprising of the neighbouring counties. So things went till Thursday, December 16, the last of the twenty days. The morning was a drizzling rain, but in the afternoon it cleared off bright and crisp and frosty, while all day in the Old South Church a town-meeting was busy with momentous issues. After midnight nothing but a personal assault could prevent the collector from seizing the tea and bringing it ashore, and nothing but personal violence could prevent one or both the young Hutchinsons from paying the duty. There was but one peaceful avenue of escape from the situation. The governor could grant a pass which would enable the ships to go out without a clearance. Would he do so? Samuel Adams knew him too well to expect it. Francis Rotch, the owner of the principal ship, was sent out to the governor's country house on Milton Hill, to ask for a pass. While his return was awaited a gentleman highly esteemed, already wasted with the disease that was soon to end his days, addressed the assembly.

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He reminded them of the probable consequences of what might be done that day — nothing less than war against the whole power of Great Britain — and begged them to act with such consequences fully in view. After this touching word of caution from Josiah Quincy, a final vote was taken. Suppose the governor should refuse, might the tea on any account whatever be suffered to land? One cannot step into the venerable church to-day without hearing its rafters ring with that sturdy unanimous “No!” How the vote was to be carried into effect few people knew, but Samuel Adams knew, and so did Dr. Joseph Warren and others who had counselled together in a back room in Edes and Gill’s printing-office on the corner of Court and Brattle streets. There was a Boston merchant who evidently knew what was intended. It had grown dark and the great church was dimly lighted with candles when this gentleman got up and asked, “Mr. Moderator, did any one ever think how tea would mix with salt water?” and there was a shout of applause. At length the governor’s refusal came, and never did such silence settle down over an assembly as when Adams arose and exclaimed, “This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!” The response to this solemn watchword was the war-whoop from outside, and those strange Indian figures passing by in the moonlight. Was there ever such a riot as that which followed, when those thronging thousands upon the wharves stood with bated breath, while the busy click of hatchets came from the ships and from moment to moment a broken chest was hoisted upon the bulwark and its fragrant contents emptied into the icy waters? Things happened there,


the like of which, I dare say, were never recorded in the history of riots. So punctilious were those Indians that when one of them by accident broke a padlock belonging to one of the ship's officers, he bought a new padlock the next morning and made good the loss.

Who were these Indians? Admiral Montagu and other British gentlemen, who with him beheld the proceedings, saw fit to declare that they "were not a disorderly rabble, but men of sense, coolness, and intrepidity." Paul Revere was among them, and, in all probability, Dr. Warren was one. George Robert Twelves Hawes, one of the last survivors, died in 1835, at the age of ninety-eight. He used to tell how, while he was busily ripping open a chest, the man next to him raised his hatchet so high that the Indian blanket fell away from his arm and disclosed the well-known crimson velvet sleeve and point-lace ruffles of John Hancock!

Can anybody really discover in these proceedings anything that justifies a comparison with the furious pro-slavery mob that threatened Garrison's life? The writer who made that strange comparison seems to have been thinking of the fact that, in both cases, well-dressed persons were concerned. I suppose Hancock's velvet sleeve may be responsible for the droll analogy. It seems to me eminently fitting that the hand which subscribed so handsomely the Declaration of Independence should have taken part in the decisive defiance that brought on the war. We are told that the destruction of the tea was "illegal"; so was the Declaration of Independence. Each rested upon the paramount right of self-preservation, and the

former was no more the act of a mob than the latter. It was the deliberate and coolly reasoned act of the people of Massachusetts, cordially approved and stoutly defended by the people of the thirteen colonies. The contemporary British historian Gordon saw clearly that the crisis was one in which no compromise was possible, and the only alternative, the surrender of Boston, would have imperilled the whole future of America. As Dr. Ramsay said, you could not condemn the Tea Party without condemning the Revolution altogether, for in no other way could the men of Boston discharge the duty which they owed to the country. But a more fitting comment will never be uttered than that of the enthusiastic John Adams, the day after the event: "This is the most magnificent movement of all. There is a dignity, a majesty, a sublimity, in this last effort of the patriots, that I greatly admire. . . . This destruction of the tea . . . must have so important consequences and so lasting, that I cannot but consider it an epoch in history."

Yes, this is the true judgment. If there is anything in human life that is dignified and grand, it is the self-restraint of masses of men under extreme provocation, and the steady guidance of their actions by the light of sober reason; and from this point of view the Boston Tea Party will always remain a typical instance of what is majestic and sublime.





**VI**

**REMINISCENCES OF HUXLEY**





## VI

### REMINISCENCES OF HUXLEY

THE recent publication of an admirable memoir of Huxley, by his son Leonard,<sup>1</sup> has awakened in me old memories of some of the pleasantest scenes I have ever known. The book is written in a spirit of charming frankness, and is thickly crowded with details not one of which could well be spared. A notable feature is the copiousness of the extracts from familiar letters, in which everything is faithfully reproduced, even to the genial nonsense that abounds, or the big, big D that sometimes, though rarely, adds its pungent flavour. Huxley was above all things a man absolutely simple and natural; he never posed, was never starched, or prim, or on his good behaviour; and he was nothing if not playful. A biography that brings him before us, robust and lifelike on every page, as this book does, is surely a model biography. A brief article, like the present, cannot even attempt to do justice to it, but I am moved to jot down some of the reminiscences and reflections which it has awakened.

My first introduction to the fact of Huxley's existence was in February, 1861, when I was a sophomore at Harvard. The second serial number of Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," which had just arrived from London, and on which I was feasting my soul,

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley." By his son, Leonard Huxley. In two volumes. New York : D. Appleton & Co., 1900.

contained an interesting reference to Huxley's views concerning a "pre-geologic past of unknown duration." In the next serial number a footnote informed the reader that the phrase "persistence of force," since become so famous, was suggested by Huxley, as avoiding an objection which Spencer had raised to the current expression "conservation of force." Further references to Huxley, as also to Tyndall, in the course of the book, left me with a vague conception of the three friends as, after a certain fashion, partners in the business of scientific research and generalization.

Some such vague conception was developed in the mind of the general public into divers droll misconceptions. Even as Spencer's famous phrase, "survival of the fittest," which he suggested as preferable to "natural selection," is by many people ascribed to Darwin, so we used to hear wrathful allusions to "Huxley's Belfast Address," and similar absurdities. The climax was reached in 1876, when Huxley and his wife made a short visit to the United States. Early in that year Tyndall had married a daughter of Lord Claud Hamilton, brother of the Duke of Abercorn, and one fine morning in August we were gravely informed by the newspapers that "Huxley and his titled bride" had just arrived in New York. For our visitors, who had left at home in London seven goodly children, some of them approaching maturity, this item of news was a source of much merriment.

To return to my story, it was not long before my notion of Huxley came to be that of a very sharply defined and powerful individuality; for such he appeared in his "Lectures on the Origin of Species" and in his "Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature," both

published in 1863. Not long afterward, in reading the lay sermon on "The Advisableness of Improving Natural Knowledge," I felt that here was a poetic soul whom one could not help loving. In those days I fell in with Youmans, who had come back from England bubbling and brimming over with racy anecdotes about the philosophers and men of science. Of course the Soapy Sam incident was not forgotten, and Youmans' version of it, which was purely from hearsay, could make no pretension to verbal accuracy; nevertheless it may be worth citing. Mr. Leonard Huxley has carefully compared several versions from eye and ear witnesses, together with his father's own comments, and I do not know where one could find a more striking illustration of the difficulty of attaining absolute accuracy in writing even contemporary history.

As I heard the anecdote from Youmans: It was at the meeting of the British Association at Oxford in 1860, soon after the publication of Darwin's epoch-making book, and while people in general were wagging their heads at it, that the subject came up for discussion before a fashionable and hostile audience. Samuel Wilberforce, the plausible and self-complacent Bishop of Oxford, commonly known as "Soapy Sam," launched out in a rash speech, conspicuous for its ignorant misstatements, and highly seasoned with appeals to the prejudices of the audience, upon whose lack of intelligence the speaker relied. Near him sat Huxley, already eminent as a man of science, and known to look favourably upon Darwinism, but more or less youthful withal, only five-and-thirty, so that the bishop anticipated sport in badgering him. At the close of his speech he suddenly turned upon Huxley

and begged to be informed if the learned gentleman was really willing to be regarded as the descendant of a monkey. Eager self-confidence had blinded the bishop to the tactical blunder in thus coarsely inviting a retort. Huxley was instantly upon his feet with a speech demolishing the bishop's card house of mistakes; and at the close he observed that since a question of personal preferences had been very improperly brought into the discussion of a scientific theory, he felt free to confess that if the alternatives were descent, on the one hand, from a respectable monkey, or on the other from a bishop of the English Church who could stoop to such misrepresentations and sophisms as the audience had lately listened to, he should declare in favour of the monkey!

Now this was surely not what Huxley said, nor how he said it. His own account is that, at Soapy Sam's insolent taunt, he simply whispered to his neighbour, Sir Benjamin Brodie, "The Lord hath delivered him into my hands!" a remark which that excellent old gentleman received with a stolid stare. Huxley sat quiet until the chairman called him up. His concluding retort seems to have been most carefully reported by John Richard Green, then a student at Oxford, in a letter to his friend, Boyd Dawkins: "I asserted — and I repeat — that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would rather be a man — a man of restless and versatile intellect — who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention

of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice." This can hardly be accurate; no electric effect could have been wrought by so long-winded a sentiment. I agree with a writer in *Macmillan's Magazine* that this version is "much too Green," but it doubtless gives the purport of what Huxley probably said in half as many but far more picturesque and fitting words. I have a feeling that the electric effect is best preserved in the Youmans version, in spite of its manifest verbal inaccuracy. It is curious to read that in the ensuing buzz of excitement a lady fainted, and had to be carried from the room; but the audience were in general quite alive to the bishop's blunder in manners and tactics, and, with the genuine English love of fair play, they loudly applauded Huxley. From that time forth it was recognized that he was not the sort of man to be browbeaten. As for Bishop Wilberforce, he carried with him from the affray no bitterness, but was always afterward most courteous to his castigator.


When Huxley had his scrimmage with Congreve, in 1869, over the scientific aspects of Positivism, I was giving lectures to postgraduate classes at Harvard on the Positive Philosophy. I never had any liking for Comte or his ideas, but entertained an absurd notion that the epithet "Positive" was a proper and convenient one to apply to scientific methods and scientific philosophy in general. In the course of the discussion I attacked sundry statements of Huxley with quite unnecessary warmth, for such is the superfluous belligerency of youth. The *World* reported my lectures in full, insomuch that each one filled six or seven columns, and the editor, Manton Marble, sent copies regularly

to Huxley and others. Four years afterward I went to London, to spend some time there in finishing "Cosmic Philosophy" and getting it through the press. I had corresponded with Spencer for several years, and soon after my arrival he gave one of his exquisite little dinners at his own lodgings. Spencer's omniscience extended to the kitchen, and as composer of a menu neither Carême nor Francatelli could have surpassed him. The other guests were Huxley, Tyndall, Lewes, and Hughlings Jackson. Huxley took but little notice of me, and I fancied that something in those lectures must have offended him. But two or three weeks later Spencer took me to the dinner at the X Club, all the members of which were present except Lubbock. When the coffee was served Huxley brought his chair around to my side, and talked with me the rest of the evening. My impression was that he was the cosiest man I had ever met. He ended by inviting me to his house for the next Sunday at six, for what he called "tall tea."

This was the introduction to a series of experiences so delightful that, if one could only repeat them, the living over again all the bad quarters of an hour in one's lifetime would not be too high a price to pay. I was already at home in several London households, but nowhere was anything so sweet as the cordial welcome in that cosey drawing-room on Marlborough Place, where the great naturalist became simply "Pater" (pronounced *Patter*), to be pulled about and tousled and kissed by those lovely children; nor could anything so warm the heart of an exile (if so melancholy a term can properly be applied to anybody sojourning in beloved London) as to have the little seven-year-old miss

climb into one's lap and ask for fairy tales, whereof I luckily had an ample repertoire. Nothing could be found more truly hospitable than the long dinner table, where our beaming host used to explain, "Because this is called a tea is no reason why a man shouldn't pledge his friend in a stoup of Rhenish, or even in a noggin of Glenlivet, if he has a mind to." At the end of our first evening I was told that a plate would be set for me every Sunday, and I must never fail to come. After two or three Sundays, however, I began to feel afraid of presuming too much upon the cordiality of these new friends, and so, by a superhuman effort of self-control, and at the cost of unspeakable wretchedness, I stayed away. For this truancy I was promptly called to account, a shamefaced confession was extorted, and penalties, vague but dire, were denounced in case of a second offence; so I never missed another Sunday evening till the time came for leaving London.

Part of the evening used to be spent in the little overcrowded library, before a blazing fire, while we discussed all manner of themes, scientific or poetical, practical or philosophical, religious or æsthetic. Huxley, like a true epicure, smoked the sweet little brierwood pipe, but he seemed to take especial satisfaction in seeing me smoke very large full-flavoured Havanas from a box which some Yankee admirer had sent him. Whatever subject came uppermost in our talk, I was always impressed with the fulness and accuracy of his information and the keenness of his judgments; but that is, of course, what any appreciative reader can gather from his writings. Unlike Spencer, he was an omnivorous reader. Of historical and literary knowledge, such as one usually gets from books, Spencer





had a great deal, and of an accurate and well-digested sort; he had some incomprehensible way of absorbing it through the pores of the skin, — at least, he never seemed to read books. Huxley, on the other hand, seemed to read everything worth reading, — history, politics, metaphysics, poetry, novels, even books of science; for perhaps it may not be superfluous to point out to the general world of readers that no great man of science owes his scientific knowledge to books. Huxley's colossal knowledge of the animal kingdom was not based upon the study of Cuvier, Baer, and other predecessors, but upon direct personal examination of thousands of organisms, living and extinct. He cherished a wholesome contempt for mere bookishness in matters of science, and carried on war to the knife against the stupid methods of education in vogue forty years ago, when students were expected to learn something of chemistry or palæontology by reading about black oxide of manganese or the dentition of anoplotherium. A rash clergyman once, without further equipment in natural history than some desultory reading, attacked the Darwinian theory in some sundry magazine articles, in which he made himself uncommonly merry at Huxley's expense. This was intended to draw the great man's fire; and as the batteries remained silent the author proceeded to write to Huxley, calling his attention to the articles, and at the same time, with mock modesty, asking advice as to the further study of these deep questions. Huxley's answer was brief and to the point, "Take a cockroach and dissect it!"

Too exclusive devotion, however, to scalpel and microscope may leave a man of science narrow and

one-sided, dead to some of the most interesting aspects of human life. But Huxley was keenly alive in all directions, and would have enjoyed mastering all branches of knowledge, if the days had only been long enough. He found rest and recreation in change of themes, and after a long day's scientific work at South Kensington would read Sybel's "French Revolution," or Lange's "History of Materialism," or the last new novel, until the witching hour of midnight. This reading was in various languages. Without a university education, Huxley had a remarkably good knowledge of Latin. He was fond of Spinoza, and every once in a while, in the course of our chats, he would exclaim: "Come, now, let's see what old Benedict has to say about it! There's no better man." Then he would take the book from its shelf, and while we both looked on the page he would give voice to his own comments in a broad and liberal paraphrase, that showed his sound and scholarlike appreciation of every point in the Latin text. A spirited and racy version it would have been, had he ever undertaken to translate Spinoza. So I remember saying once, but he replied, "We must leave it for young Fred Pollock, whom I think you have seen; he is shy and doesn't say much, but I can tell you, whatever he does is sure to be amazingly good." They who are familiar with Sir Frederick Pollock's noble book on Spinoza, to say nothing of his other works, will recognize the truth of the prophecy.

Huxley had also a mastery of French, Italian, and German, and perhaps of some other modern languages. Angelo Heilprin says that he found him

studying Russian, chiefly in order to acquire a thorough familiarity with the work of the great anatomist, Kovalevsky. How far he may have carried that study I know not; but his son tells us that it was also in middle life that he began Greek, in order to read, at first hand, Aristotle and the New Testament. To read Aristotle with critical discernment requires an extremely good knowledge of Greek; and if Huxley got so far as that, we need not be surprised at hearing that he could enjoy the Homeric poems in the original.

I suppose there were few topics in the heavens or on earth that did not get overhauled at that little library fireside. At one time it would be politics, and my friend would thank God that, whatever mistakes he might have made in life, he had never bowed the knee to either of those intolerable humbugs, Louis Napoleon or Benjamin Disraeli. Without admitting that the shifty Jew deserved to be placed on quite so low a plane as Hortense Beauharnais's feeble son, we can easily see how distasteful he would be to a man of Huxley's earnest and whole-souled directness. But antipathy to Disraeli did not in this case mean fondness for Gladstone. In later years, when Huxley was having his great controversy with Gladstone, we find him writing: "Seriously, it is to me a great thing that the destinies of this country should at present be seriously influenced by a man who, whatever he may be in the affairs of which I am no judge, is nothing but a copious shuffler in those which I do understand." In 1873 there occurred a brief passage at arms between Gladstone and Herbert Spencer, in which the great statesman's intellect


looked amusingly small and commonplace in contrast with the giant mind of the philosopher. The defeated party was left with no resources except rhetorical artifice to cover his retreat, and his general aspect was foxy, not to say Jesuitical. At least so Huxley declared, and I thoroughly agreed with him. Yet surely it would be a very inadequate and unjust estimate of Gladstone, which should set him down as a shuffler, and there leave the matter. From the statesman's point of view it might be contended that Gladstone was exceptionally direct and frank. But a statesman is seldom, if ever, called upon to ascertain and exhibit the fundamental facts of a case without bias and in the disinterested mood which Science demands of her votaries. The statesman's business is to accomplish sundry concrete political purposes, and he measures statements primarily, not by their truth, but by their availableness as means toward a practical end. Pure science cultivates a widely different habit of mind. One could no more expect a prime minister, as such, to understand Huxley's attitude in presence of a scientific problem, than a deaf-mute to comprehend a symphony of Beethoven. Gladstone's aim was to score a point against his adversary, at whatever cost, whereas Huxley was as quick to detect his own mistakes as anybody else's; and such differences in temperament were scarcely compatible with mutual understanding.

If absolute loyalty to truth, involving complete self-abnegation in face of the evidence, be the ideal aim of the scientific inquirer, there have been few men in whom that ideal has been so perfectly realized as in Huxley. If ever he were tempted by some fancied

charm of speculation to swerve a hair's breadth from the strict line of fact, the temptation was promptly slaughtered and made no sign. For intellectual integrity, he was a spotless Sir Galahad. I believe there was nothing in life which he dreaded so much, as the sin of allowing his reason to be hoodwinked by personal predilections, or whatever Francis Bacon would have called "idols of the cave." Closely connected with this ever present feeling was a holy horror of *a priori* convictions of logical necessity, and of long festoons of deductive argument suspended from such airy supports. The prime necessity for him was to appeal at every step to observation and experiment, and in the absence of such verification, to rest content with saying, "I do not know." It is to Huxley, I believe, that we owe the epithet "Agnostic," for which all men of scientific proclivities owe him a debt of gratitude, since it happened to please the popular fancy and at once supplanted the label "Positivist" which used to be ruthlessly pasted upon all such men, in spite of their protests and struggles. No better word than "Agnostic" could be found to express Huxley's mental temperament, but with anything like a formulated system of agnosticism he had little more to do than with other "isms." He used to smile at the formidable parade which Lewes was making with his "Objective Method and Verification," in which capital letters did duty for part of the argument; and as for Dean Mansel's elaborate agnosticism, in his "Limits of Religious Thought," Huxley, taking a hint from Hogarth, used to liken him to a (theological) inn-keeper who has climbed upon the sign-board of the rival (scientific) inn, and is busily sawing it off, quite

oblivious of the grewsome fact that he is sitting upon the unsupported end! But while he thus set little store by current agnostic metaphysics, Huxley's intellectual climate, if I may so speak, was one of perfect agnosticism. In intimate converse with him, he always seemed to me a thoroughgoing and splendid representation of Hume; indeed, in his writings he somewhere lets fall a remark expressing a higher regard for Hume than for Kant. It was at this point that we used to part company in our talks: so long as it was a question of Berkeley we were substantially agreed, but when it came to Hume we agreed to differ.

It is this complete agnosticism of temperament, added to his abiding dread of intellectual dishonesty, that explains Huxley's attitude toward belief in a future life. He was not a materialist; nobody saw more clearly than he the philosophic flimsiness of materialism, and he looked with strong disapproval upon the self-complacent negations of Ludwig Buechner. Nevertheless, with regard to the belief in an immortal soul, his position was avowedly agnostic, with perhaps just the slightest possible tacit though reluctant leaning toward the negative. This slight bias was apparently due to two causes. First, it is practically beyond the power of science to adduce evidence in support of the soul's survival of the body, since the whole question lies beyond the bounds of our terrestrial experience. Huxley was the last man to assume that the possibilities of nature are limited by our experience, and I think he would have seen the force of the argument that, in questions where evidence is in the nature of the case inaccessible, our inability to produce it does not afford




even the slightest *prima facie* ground for a negative verdict.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, he seems to have felt as if the absence of evidence did afford some such *prima facie* ground; for in a letter to Charles Kingsley, written in 1860, soon after the sudden death of his first child, he says: "Had I lived a couple of centuries earlier, I could have fancied a devil scoffing at me . . . and asking me what profit it was to have stripped myself of the hopes and consolations of the mass of mankind. To which my only reply was, and is, O devil! truth is better than much profit. I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after the other, as the penalty, still I will not lie." This striking declaration shows that the second cause of the bias was the dread of self-deception. It was a noble exhibition of intellectual honesty raised to a truly Puritanic fervour of self-abnegation. Just because life is sweet, and the love of it well-nigh irrepressible, must all such feelings be suspected as tempters, and frowned out of our temple of philosophy? Rather than run any risk of accepting a belief because it is pleasant, let us incur whatever chance there may be of error in the opposite direction; thus we shall at least avoid the one unpardonable sin. Such, I think, was the shape which the case assumed in Huxley's mind. To me it takes a very different shape; but I cannot help feeling that mankind is going to be helped by such stanch intellectual integrity as his far more than it is going to be helped by consoling doctrines of whatever sort; and therefore his noble self-abnegation, even though it may

<sup>1</sup> I have explained this point at some length in the "Unseen World," pp. 43-53.

have been greater than was called for, is worthy of most profound and solemn homage.

But we did not spend the whole of the evening in the little library. Brierwood and Havana at length gave out, and the drawing-room had its claims upon us. There was a fondness for music in the family, and it was no unusual thing for us to gather around the piano and sing psalms, after which there would perhaps be a Beethoven sonata, or one of Chopin's nocturnes, or perhaps a song. I can never forget the rich contralto voice of one bright and charming daughter, since passed away, or the refrain of an old-fashioned song which she sometimes sang about "My love, that loved me long ago." From music it was an easy transition to scraps of Browning or Goethe, leading to various disquisition. Of mirth and badinage there was always plenty. I dare say there was not another room in London where so much exuberant nonsense might have been heard. It is no uncommon thing for masters of the Queen's English to delight in torturing it, and Huxley enjoyed that sort of pastime as much as James Russell Lowell. "Smole" and "declone" were specimens of the preterites that used to fall from his lips; and as for puns, the air was blue with them. I cannot recall one of them now, but the following example, from a letter of 1855 inviting Hooker to his wedding, will suffice to show the quality: "I terminate my Baccalaureate and take my degree of M. A. trimony (isn't that atrocious?) on Saturday, July 21."

One evening the conversation happened to touch upon the memorable murder of Dr. Parkman by Dr. Webster, and I expressed some surprise that an expert chemist, like Webster, should have been so slow in





getting his victim's remains out of the way. "Well," quoth Huxley, "there's a good deal of substance in a human body. It isn't easy to dispose of so much *corpus delicti*,—a reflection which has frequently deterred me when on the point of killing somebody." At such remarks a soft ripple of laughter would run about the room, with murmurs of "Oh, Pater!" It was just the same in his lectures to his students. In the simple old experiment illustrating reflex action, a frog, whose brain had been removed, was touched upon the right side of the back with a slightly irritating acid, and would forthwith reach up with his right hind leg and rub the place. The next thing in order was to tie the right leg, whereupon the left leg would come up, and by dint of strenuous effort reach the itching spot. One day the stretching was so violent as to result in a particularly elaborate and comical somersault on the part of the frog, whereupon Huxley exclaimed, "You see, it doesn't require much of a brain to be an acrobat!" In an examination on anatomy a very callow lad got the valves of the heart wrong, putting the mitral on the right side; but Huxley took compassion on him, with the remark, "Poor little beggar! I never got them correctly myself until I reflected that a bishop was never in the right!" On another occasion, at the end of a lecture, he asked one of the students if he understood it all. The student replied, "All, sir, but one part, during which you stood between me and the blackboard." "Ah," rejoined Huxley, "I did my best to make myself clear, but could not make myself transparent!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have here eked out my own reminiscences by instances cited from Leonard Huxley's book.

Probably the most tedious bore on earth is the man who feels it incumbent on him always to be facetious and to turn everything into a joke. Lynch law is about the right sort of thing for such persons. Huxley had nothing in common with them. His drollery was the spontaneous bubbling over of the seething fountains of energy. The world's strongest spirits, from Shakespeare down, have been noted for playfulness. The prim and sober creatures who know neither how to poke fun nor to take it are apt to be the persons who are ridden by their work, — useful mortals after their fashion, mayhap, but not interesting or stimulating. Huxley's playfulness lightened the burden of life for himself and for all with whom he came in contact. I seem to see him now, looking up from his end of the table, — for my place was usually at Mrs. Huxley's end, — his dark eyes kindling under their shaggy brows, and a smile of indescribable beauty spreading over the swarthy face, as prelude to some keen and pithy but never unkind remark. Electric in energy, formidable in his incisiveness, he smote hard; but there was nothing cruel about him, nor did he ever inflict pain through heedless remarks. That would have been a stupidity of which he was incapable. His quickness and sureness of perception, joined with his abounding kindness, made him a man of almost infinite tact. I had not known him long before I felt that the ruling characteristic in his nature was *tenderness*. He reminded me of one of Charles Reade's heroes, Colonel Dujardin, who had the eye of a hawk, but down somewhere in the depths of that eye of a hawk there was the eye of a dove. It was chiefly the sympathetic quality in the man that exerted upon me an ever

strengthening spell. My experiences in visiting him had one notable feature, which I found it hard to interpret. After leaving the house, at the close of a Sunday evening, the outside world used to seem cold and lonely for being cut off from that presence; yet on the next Sunday, at the moment of his cordial greeting, a feeling always came over me that up to that moment I had never fully taken in how lovable he was, I had never quite done him justice. In other words, no matter how vivid the image which I carried about in my mind, it instantly seemed dim and poor in presence of the reality. Such feelings are known to lovers; in other relations of life they are surely unusual. I was speaking about this to my dear old friend, the late Alexander Macmillan, when he suddenly exclaimed: "You may well feel so, my boy. I tell you, there is so much real Christianity in Huxley that if it were parcelled out among all the men, women, and children in the British Islands, there would be enough to save the soul of every one of them, and plenty to spare!"

I have said that Huxley was never unkind; it is perhaps hardly necessary to tell his readers that he could be sharp and severe, if the occasion required. I have heard his wife say that he never would allow himself to be preyed upon by bores, and knew well how to get rid of them. Some years after the time of which I have been writing, I dined one evening at the Savile Club with Huxley, Spencer, and James Sime. As we were chatting over our coffee, some person unknown to us came in and sat down on a sofa near by. Presently, this man, becoming interested in the conversation, cut short one of our party, and addressed a silly remark to Spencer in reply to something which


he had been saying. Spencer's answer was civil, but brief, and not inviting. Nothing abashed, the stranger kept on, and persisted in forcing himself into the conversation, despite our bleak frowns and arctic glances. It was plain that something must be done, and while the intruder was aiming a question directly at Huxley, the latter turned his back upon him. This was intelligible even to asinine apprehension, and the remainder of our evening was unmolested.

I never knew (not being inquisitive) just when the Huxleys began having their "tall teas" on Sunday evenings; but during their first winter I seldom met any visitors at their house, except once or twice Ray Lankester and Michael Foster. Afterward, Huxley with his wife, on their visit to America, spent a few summer days with my family at Petersham, where the great naturalist learned for the first time what a tin dipper is. Once, in London, in speaking about the starry heavens, I had said that I never could make head or tail of any constellation except the Dipper, and of course everybody must recognize in that the resemblance to a dipper. To my surprise, one of the young ladies asked, "What is a dipper?" My effort at explanation went far enough to evoke the idea of a "ladle," but with that approximation I was fain to let the matter rest until that August day in New England, when, after a tramp in the woods, my friends quaffed cool mountain water from a dipper, and I was told that not only the name, but the thing, is a Yankee notion.

Some time after this I made several visits to England, giving lectures at the Royal Institution and elsewhere, and saw the Huxleys often, and on one

occasion, with my wife, spent a fortnight or so at their home in Marlborough Place. The Sunday evenings had come to be a time for receiving friends, without any of the formality that often attaches to "receptions." Half a dozen or more would drop in for the "high tea." I then noticed the change in the adjective, and observed that the phrase and the institution were not absolutely confined to the Huxley household; but their origin is still for me enshrouded in mystery, like the "empire of the Toltecs." After the informal and jolly supper others would come in, until the company might number from twenty to thirty. Among the men whom I recall to mind (the married ones accompanied by their wives, of course) were Mark Pattison, Lecky, and J. R. Green, Burdon Sanderson and Lau-der Brunton, Alma Tadema, Sir James Stephen and his brother Leslie, Sir Frederick Pollock, Lord Arthur Russell, Frederic Harrison, Spencer Walpole, Romanes, and Ralston. Some of these I met for the first time; others were old friends. Nothing could be more charming than the graceful simplicity with which all were entertained, nor could anything be more evident than the affectionate veneration which everybody felt for the host.

The last time that I saw my dear friend was early in 1883, just before coming home to America. I found him lying on the sofa, too ill to say much, but not too ill for a jest or two at his own expense. The series of ailments had begun which were to follow him for the rest of his days. I was much concerned about him, but journeys to England had come to seem such a simple matter that the thought of its being our last meeting never entered my mind. A



few letters passed back and forth with the lapse of years, the last one (in 1894) inquiring when I was likely to be able to come and visit him in the pretty home which he had made in Sussex, where he was busy with "digging in the garden and spoiling grandchildren." When the news of the end came, it was as a sudden and desolating shock.


There were few magazines or newspapers which did not contain articles about Huxley, and in general those articles were considerably more than the customary obituary notice. They were apt to be more animated than usual, as if they had caught something from the blithe spirit of the man; and they gave so many details as to show the warm and widespread interest with which he was regarded. One thing, however, especially struck me. While the writers of these articles seemed familiar with Huxley's philosophical and literary writings, with his popular lectures on scientific subjects and his controversies with sundry clergymen, they seemed to know nothing whatever about his original scientific work. It was really a singular spectacle, if one pauses to think about it. Here are a score of writers engaged in paying tribute to a man as one of the great scientific lights of the age, and yet, while they all know something about what he would have considered his fugitive work, not one of them so much as alludes to the cardinal achievements in virtue of which his name marks an epoch! It is very much as if the biographers of Newton were to enlarge upon his official labours at the Mint and his theory of light, while preserving a dead silence as to gravitation and fluxions. A few words concerning Huxley's work will therefore not

seem superfluous. A few words are all that can here be given; I cannot pretend even to make a well-rounded sketch.

In one respect there was a curious similarity between the beginnings of Huxley's scientific career and of Darwin's. Both went, as young men, on long voyages into the southern hemisphere, in ships of the royal navy, and from the study of organisms encountered on these voyages both were led to theories of vast importance. Huxley studied with keen interest and infinite patience the jellyfish and polyps floating on the surface of the tropical seas through which his ship passed. Without books or advisers, and with scant aid of any sort except his microscope, which had to be tied to keep it steady, he scrutinized and dissected these lowly forms of life, and made drawings and diagrams illustrating the intricacies of their structure, until he was able, by comparison, to attain some very interesting results. During four years, he says, "I sent home communication after communication to the Linnæan Society, with the same result as that obtained by Noah when he sent the raven out of his ark. Tired at last of hearing nothing about them, I determined to do or die, and in 1849 I drew up a more elaborate paper, and forwarded it to the Royal Society." This was a memoir *On the Anatomy and the Affinities of the Family of Medusæ*; and it proved to be his dove, though he did not know it until his return to England, a year later. Then he found that his paper had been published, and in 1851, at the age of twenty-six, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. He went on writing papers giving sundry results of his observations, and the very next year received the society's Royal

medal, a supreme distinction which he shared with Joule, Stokes, and Humboldt. In the address upon the presentation of the medal, the president, Lord Rosse, declared that Huxley had not only for the first time adequately described the Medusæ and laid down rational principles for classifying them, but had inaugurated "a process of reasoning, the results of which can scarcely yet be anticipated, but must bear in a very important degree upon some of the most abstruse points of what may be called transcendental physiology."

In other words, the youthful Huxley had made a discovery that went to the bottom of things; and as in most if not all such cases, he had enlarged our knowledge, not only of facts, but of methods. It was the beginning of a profound reconstruction of the classification of animals, extinct and living. In the earlier half of the century the truest classification was Cuvier's. That great genius emancipated himself from the notion that groups of animals should be arranged in an ascending or descending series, and he fully proved the existence of three divergent types, — Vertebrata, Mollusca, and Articulata. Some of the multitude of animals lower or less specialized than these he grouped by mistake along with Mollusca or Articulata, while all the rest he threw into a fourth class, which he called Radiata. It was evident that this type was far less clearly defined than the three higher types. In fact, it was open to the same kind of objection that used to be effectively urged against Max Müller's so-called Turanian group of languages: it was merely a negation. Radiata were simply animals that were neither Articulata nor Mollusca nor Vertebrata; in short, they were





a motley multitude, about which there was a prevailing confusion of ideas at the time when young Huxley began the study of jellyfish.

We all know how it was the work of the great Esthonian embryologist, Baer, that turned Herbert Spencer toward his discovery of the law of evolution. It is therefore doubly interesting to know that in these early studies Huxley also profited by his knowledge of Baer's methods and results. It all tended toward a theory of evolution, although Baer himself never got so far as evolution in the modern sense; and as for Huxley, when he studied *Medusæ*, he was not concerned with any general theory whatever, but only with putting into shape what he saw.

And what he saw was that throughout their development the *Medusæ* consist of two foundation membranes, or delicate weblike tissues of cells, — one forming the outer integument, the other doing duty as stomach lining, — and that there was no true body cavity with blood-vessels. He showed that groups apparently quite dissimilar, such as the hydroid and scypharian polyps, the *Physophoridae* and sea anemones, are constructed upon the same plan; and so he built up his famous group of *Cœlenterata*, or animals with only a stomach cavity, as contrasted with all higher organisms, which might be called *Cœlomata*, or animals with a true body cavity, containing a stomach with other viscera and blood-vessels. In all *Cœlomata*, from the worm up to man, there is a third foundation membrane.

Thus the Cuvierian group of *Radiata* was broken up, and the way was prepared for this far more profound and true arrangement: (1) *Protozoa*, such as the *amoeba* and sponges, in which there is no distinct separation

of parts performing different functions; (2) *Cœlenterata*, in which there is a simple differentiation between the inside, which accumulates energy, and the outside, which expends it; and (3) *Cœlomata*, in which the inside contains a more or less elaborate system of distinct organs devoted to nutrition and reproduction, while the outside is more or less differentiated into limbs and sense organs for interaction with the outer world. Though not yet an evolutionist, Huxley could not repress the prophetic thought that *Cœlenterata* are ancient survivals, representing a stage through which higher animal types must once have passed.

As further elaborated by Huxley, the development above the *cœlenterate* stage goes on in divergent lines; stopping abruptly in some directions, in others going on to great lengths. Thus, in the direction taken by *echinoderms*, the physical possibilities are speedily exhausted, and we stop with starfishes and *holothurians*. But among *Annuloida*, as Huxley called them, there is more flexibility, and we keep on till we reach the true *Articulata* in the highly specialized insects, arachnoids, and crustaceans. It is still more interesting to follow the *Molluscoida*, through which we are led, on the one hand, to the true *Mollusca*, reaching their culmination in the nautilus and octopus, and on the other hand to the *Tunicata*, and so on to the vertebrates.

In the comparative anatomy of vertebrates, also, Huxley's achievements were in a high degree original and remarkable. First in importance, perhaps, was his classification of birds, in which their true position and relationships were for the first time disclosed. Huxley showed that all birds, extinct and living, must be arranged in three groups, of which the first is repre-

sented by the fossil archæopteryx with its hand-like wing and lizard-like tail, the second by the ostrich and its congeners, and the third by all other living birds. He further demonstrated the peculiarly close relationship between birds and reptiles through the extinct dinosaurs. In all these matters his powerful originality was shown in the methods by which these important results were reached. Every new investigation which he made seemed to do something toward raising the study of biology to a higher plane, as for example his celebrated controversy with Owen on the true nature of the vertebrate skull. The mention of Owen reminds us that it was also Huxley who overthrew Cuvier's order of *Quadrumana*, by proving that apes are not four-handed, but have two hands and two feet; he showed that neither in limbs nor in brain does man present differences from other primates that are of higher than generic value. Indeed, there were few corners of the animal world, past or present, which Huxley did not at some time or other overhaul, and to our knowledge of which he did not make contributions of prime importance. The instances here cited may serve to show the kind of work which he did, but my mention of them is necessarily meagre. In the department of classification, the significance of which has been increased tenfold by the doctrine of evolution, his name must surely rank foremost among the successors of the mighty Cuvier.

Before 1860 the vastness and accuracy of Huxley's acquirements and the soundness of his judgment were well understood by the men of his profession, insomuch that Charles Darwin, when about to publish "*The Origin of Species*," said that there were three men in

England upon whose judgment he relied; if he could convince those three, he could afford to wait for the rest. The three were Lyell, Hooker, and Huxley, and he convinced them. How sturdily Huxley fought Darwin's battles is inspiring to remember. Darwin rather shrank from controversy, and, while he welcomed candid criticism, seldom took any notice of ill-natured attacks. On one occasion, nevertheless, a somewhat ugly assault moved Darwin to turn and rend the assailant, which was easily and neatly done in two pages at the end of a scientific paper. Before publishing the paper, however, Darwin sent it to Huxley, authorizing him to omit the two pages if he should think it best. Huxley promptly cancelled them, and sent Darwin a delicious little note, saying that the retort was so excellent that if it had been his own he should hardly have had virtue enough to suppress it; but although it was well deserved, he thought it would be better to refrain. "If I say a savage thing, it is only 'pretty Fanny's way'; but if you do, it is not likely to be forgotten." There was a friend worth having!

There can be little doubt, I think, that, without a particle of rancour, Huxley did keenly feel the *gaudium certaminis*. He exclaimed among the trumpets, Ha! ha! and was sure to be in the thickest of the fight. His family seemed to think that the "Gladstonian dose" had a tonic effect upon him. When he felt too ill for scientific work, he was quite ready for a scrimmage with his friends the bishops. Not caring much for episcopophagy (as Huxley once called it), and feeling that controversy of that sort was but a slaying of the slain, I used to grudge the time that was given to it and taken from other things. In 1879 he showed

me the synopsis of a projected book on "The Dog," which was to be an original contribution to the phylogenetic history of the order Carnivora. The reader who recalls his book on "The Crayfish" may realize what such a book about dogs would have been. It was interrupted and deferred, and finally pushed aside, by the thousand and one duties and cares that were thrust upon him, — work on government commissions, educational work, parish work, everything that a self-sacrificing and public-spirited man could be loaded with. In the later years, whenever I opened a magazine and found one of the controversial articles, I read it with pleasure, but sighed for the dog book.

I dare say, though, it was all for the best. "To smite all humbugs, however big; to give a nobler tone to science; to set an example of abstinence from petty personal controversies, and of toleration for everything but lying; to be indifferent as to whether the work is recognized as mine or not, so long as it is done," — such were Huxley's aims in life. And for these things, in the words of good Ben Jonson, "I loved the man, and do honour to his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any."

**VII**

**HERBERT SPENCER'S SERVICE TO  
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## VII

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*"Evolution and religion: that which perfects humanity cannot destroy religion."* — Mr. President and Gentlemen: The thought which you have uttered suggests so many and such fruitful themes of discussion, that a whole evening would not suffice to enumerate them, while to illustrate them properly would seem to require an octavo volume rather than a talk of six or eight minutes, especially when such a talk comes just after dinner. The Amazulu saying which you have cited, that those who have "stuffed bodies" cannot see hidden things, seems peculiarly applicable to any attempt to discuss the mysteries of religion at the present moment; and, after the additional warning we have just had from our good friend Mr. Schurz, I hardly know whether I ought to venture to approach so vast a theme. There are one or two points of sig-

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nal importance, however, to which I may at least call attention for a moment. It is a matter which has long since taken deep hold of my mind, and I am glad to have a chance to say something about it on so fitting an occasion. We have met here this evening to do homage to a dear and noble teacher and friend, and it is well that we should choose this time to recall the various aspects of the immortal work by which he has earned the gratitude of a world. The work which Herbert Spencer has done in organizing the different departments of human knowledge, so as to present the widest generalizations of all the sciences in a new and wonderful light, as flowing out of still deeper and wider truths concerning the universe as a whole; the great number of profound generalizations which he has established incidentally to the pursuit of this main object; the endlessly rich and suggestive thoughts which he has thrown out in such profusion by the wayside all along the course of this great philosophical enterprise—all this work is so manifest that none can fail to recognize it. It is work of the caliber of that which Aristotle and Newton did; though coming in this latter age, it as far surpasses their work in its vastness of performance as the railway surpasses the sedan chair, or as the telegraph surpasses the carrier-pigeon. But it is not of this side of our teacher's work that I wish to speak, but of a side of it that has, hitherto, met with less general recognition.

There are some people who seem to think that it is not enough that Mr. Spencer should have made all these priceless contributions to human knowledge, but actually complain of him for not giving us a complete


and exhaustive system of theology into the bargain.<sup>1</sup> What I wish, therefore, to point out is that Mr. Spencer's work on the side of religion will be seen to be no less important than his work on the side of science, when once its religious implications shall have been fully and consistently unfolded. If we look at all the systems or forms of religion of which we have any knowledge, we shall find that they differ in many superficial features. They differ in many of the transcendental doctrines which they respectively preach, and in many of the rules of conduct which they respectively lay down for men's guidance. They assert different things about the universe, and they enjoin or prohibit different kinds of behaviour on the part of their followers. The doctrine of the Trinity, which to most Christians is the most sacred of mysteries, is to all Mohammedans the foulest of blasphemies; the Brahman's conscience would be more troubled if he were to kill a cow by accident, than if he were to swear to a lie or steal a purse; the Turk, who sees no wrong in bigamy, would shrink from the sin of eating pork. But, amid all such surface differences, we find throughout all known religions two points of substantial agreement. And these two points of agreement will be admitted by modern civilized men to be of far greater importance than the innumerable differences of detail.

<sup>1</sup> "It is clear that many persons have derived from Spencer's use of the word Unknowable an impression that he intends by metaphysics to refine God away into nothing, whereas he no more cherishes any such intention than did St. Paul, when he asked, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor'; no more than Isaiah did when he declared, 'Even as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Jehovah's ways higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts.'" — JOHN FISKE, "Through Nature to God."

All religions agree in the two following assertions, one of which is of speculative and one of which is of ethical importance. One of them serves to sustain and harmonize our thoughts about the world we live in, and our place in that world; the other serves to uphold us in our efforts to do each what we can to make human life more sweet, more full of goodness and beauty, than we find it. The first of these assertions is the proposition that the things and events of the world do not exist or occur blindly or irrelevantly, but that all, from the beginning to the end of time, and throughout the furthest sweep of illimitable space, are connected together as the orderly manifestations of a divine Power, and that this divine Power is something outside of ourselves, and upon it our own existence from moment to moment depends. The second of these assertions is the proposition that men ought to do certain things, and ought to refrain from doing certain other things; and that the reason why some things are wrong to do and other things are right to do is in some mysterious, but very real, way connected with the existence and nature of this divine Power, which reveals itself in every great and every tiny thing, without which not a star courses in its mighty orbit, and not a sparrow falls to the ground. Matthew Arnold once summed up these two propositions very well when he defined God as "an eternal Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." This twofold assertion, that there is an eternal Power that is not ourselves, and that this Power makes for righteousness, is to be found, either in a rudimentary or in a highly developed state, in all known religions. In such religions as those of the Esquimaux or of



your friends the Amazulus, Mr. President, this assertion is found in a rudimentary shape on each of its two sides, — the speculative side and the ethical side; in such religions as Buddhism or Judaism it is found in a highly developed shape on both its sides. But the main point is that in all religions you find it in some shape or other. I said, a moment ago, that modern civilized men will all acknowledge that this two-sided assertion, in which all religions agree, is of far greater importance than any of the superficial points in which religions differ. It is really of much more concern to us that there is an eternal Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness, than that such a Power is onefold or threefold in its metaphysical nature, or that we ought not to play cards on Sunday, or to eat meat on Friday. No one, I believe, will deny so simple and clear a statement as this. But it is not only we modern men, who call ourselves enlightened, that will agree to this. I doubt not even the narrow-minded bigots of days now happily gone by would have been made to agree to it if they could have had some doggedly persistent Socrates to cross-question them. Calvin was willing to burn Servetus for doubting the doctrine of the Trinity, but I do not suppose that even Calvin would have argued that the belief in God's threefold nature was more fundamental than the belief in His existence and His goodness. The philosophical error with him was that he could not dissociate the less important doctrine from the more important doctrine, and the fate of the latter seemed to him wrapped up with the fate of the former. I cite this merely as a typical example. What men in past times have really valued in their religion has been



the universal twofold assertion that there is a God, who is pleased with the sight of the just man and is angry with the wicked every day, and when men have fought with one another, and murdered or calumniated one another for heresy about the Trinity or about eating meat on Friday, it has been because they have supposed belief in the non-essential doctrines to be inseparably connected with belief in the essential doctrine. In spite of all this, however, it is true that in the mind of the uncivilized man, the great central truths of religion are so densely overlaid with hundreds of trivial notions respecting dogma and ritual, that his perception of the great central truths is obscure. These great central truths, indeed, need to be clothed in a dress of little rites and superstition, in order to take hold of his dull and untrained intelligence. But in proportion as men become more civilized, and learn to think more accurately, and to take wider views of life, just so do they come to value the essential truths of religion more highly, while they attach less and less importance to superficial details.

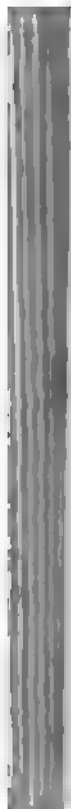
Having thus seen what is meant by the essential truths of religion, it is very easy to see what the attitude of the doctrine of evolution is toward these essential truths. It asserts and reiterates them both; and it asserts them not as dogmas handed down to us by priestly tradition, not as mysterious intuitive convictions of which we can render no account to ourselves, but as scientific truths concerning the innermost constitution of the universe — truths that have been disclosed by observation and reflection, like other scientific truths, and that accordingly harmonize naturally

and easily with the whole body of our knowledge. The doctrine of evolution asserts, as the widest and deepest truth which the study of nature can disclose to us, that there exists a power to which no limit in time or space is conceivable, and that all the phenomena of the universe, whether they be what we call material or what we call spiritual phenomena, are manifestations of this infinite and eternal Power. Now this assertion, which Mr. Spencer has so elaborately set forth as a scientific truth — nay, as the ultimate truth of science, as the truth upon which the whole structure of human knowledge philosophically rests — this assertion is identical with the assertion of an eternal Power, not ourselves, that forms the speculative basis of all religions. When Carlyle speaks of the universe as in very truth the star-domed city of God, and reminds us that through every crystal and through every grass blade, but most through every living soul, the glory of a present God still beams, he means pretty much the same thing that Mr. Spencer means, save that he speaks with the language of poetry, with language coloured by emotion, and not with the precise, formal, and colourless language of science. By many critics who forget that names are but the counters rather than the hard money of thought, objections have been raised to the use of such a phrase as the Unknowable, whereby to describe the power that is manifest in every event of the universe. Yet, when the Hebrew prophet declared that “by him were laid the foundations of the deep,” but reminded us “Who by searching can find him out?” he meant pretty much what Mr. Spencer means when he speaks of a power that is inscrutable in itself, yet is revealed from moment

to moment in every throb of the mighty rhythmic life of the universe.

And this brings me to the last and most important point of all. What says the doctrine of evolution with regard to the ethical side of this twofold assertion that lies at the bottom of all religion? Though we cannot fathom the nature of the inscrutable Power that animates the world, we know, nevertheless, a great many things that it does. Does this eternal Power, then, work for righteousness? Is there a divine sanction for holiness and a divine condemnation for sin? Are the principles of right living really connected with the intimate constitution of the universe? If the answer of science to these questions be affirmative, then the agreement with religion is complete, both on the speculative and on the practical side; and that phantom which has been the abiding terror of timid and superficial minds — that phantom of the hostility between religion and science — is exorcised now and forever. Now, science began to return a decisively affirmative answer to such questions as these when it began, with Mr. Spencer, to explain moral beliefs and moral sentiments as products of evolution. For clearly, when you say of a moral belief or a moral sentiment, that it is a product of evolution, you imply that it is something which the universe through untold ages has been labouring to bring forth, and you ascribe to it a value proportionate to the enormous effort it has cost to produce it. Still more, when with Mr. Spencer we study the principles of right living as part and parcel of the whole doctrine of the development of life upon the earth; when we see that in an ultimate analysis that is right which tends to enhance fulness of life, and

that is wrong which tends to detract from fulness of life — we then see that the distinction between right and wrong is rooted in the deepest foundations of the universe; we see that the very same forces, subtle, and exquisite, and profound, which brought upon the scene the primal germs of life and caused them to unfold, which through countless ages of struggle and death has cherished the life that could live more perfectly and destroyed the life that could only live less perfectly, until humanity, with all its hopes, and fears, and aspirations, has come into being as the crown of all this stupendous work — we see that these very same subtle and exquisite forces have wrought into the very fibres of the universe those principles of right living which it is man's highest function to put into practice. The theoretical sanction thus given to right living is incomparably the most powerful that has ever been assigned in any philosophy of ethics. Human responsibility is made more strict and solemn than ever, when the eternal Power that lives in every event of the universe is thus seen to be in the deepest possible sense the author of the moral law that should guide our lives, and in obedience to which lies our only guarantee of the happiness which is incorruptible — which neither inevitable misfortune nor unmerited obloquy can ever take away. I have but rarely touched upon a rich and suggestive topic. When this subject shall once have been expounded and illustrated with due thoroughness — as I earnestly hope it will be within the next few years — then I am sure it will be generally acknowledged that our great teacher's services to religion have been no less signal than his services to science, unparalleled as these have been in all the history of the world.



**VIII**

**JOHN TYNDALL**





## VIII

### JOHN TYNDALL

THE recent death of Professor Tyndall has removed from us a man of preëminent scientific and literary power, an early advocate and expositor of the doctrine of evolution, and one of the most genial and interesting personalities that could anywhere be found. It seems to me that this meeting of a club devoted to the study of evolution is a fitting occasion for a few words respecting Tyndall in these different capacities, — as a scientific inquirer, as an evolutionist, and as a man.

Tyndall was born in August, 1820, and was therefore four months younger than his friend, Herbert Spencer, whose seventy-fourth birthday will come on the twenty-seventh of next month. Tyndall's strong interest in science, like Spencer's, was manifested in boyhood, and there were some curious points of likeness between the early careers of the two. Neither went to college or studied according to the ordinary routine, and both received marked intellectual stimulus from their fathers. As Spencer was engaged in civil engineering from the age of seventeen to that of one-and-twenty, during which time he took part in building the London and Birmingham Railroad, so Tyndall from nineteen to twenty-four was employed in the ordnance survey, and then for three years worked at civil engineering. Both went a good way in the study of mathematics, but the differences in

their dominant tastes were already shown. As a boy, Spencer was deeply interested in the rearing of insects and studying their transformations, while he also achieved no mean proficiency as a botanist. Tyndall, on the other hand, was from the first very much absorbed in molecular physics. The dance of molecules and atoms, in its varied figures, had an irresistible attraction for him. In 1848, after giving up his position as a civil engineer, he went to the University of Marburg, where he received a doctor's degree in 1851. His work at the university consisted chiefly of original investigations on the relations of magnetism and diamagnetism to molecular arrangement. It resulted in a paper published in the *Philosophical Magazine* in 1850, which at once made Tyndall famous. It showed the qualities for which his work was ever afterward distinguished. As Huxley says of him: "That which he knew, he knew thoroughly, had turned over on all sides, and probed through and through. Whatever subject he took up, he never rested till he had attained a clear conception of all the conditions and processes involved, or had satisfied himself that it was not attainable. And in dealing with physical problems, I really think that he, in a manner, saw the atoms and molecules, and 'felt their pushes and pulls.'"

When, after a further year of work at the University of Berlin, Tyndall returned to England, he was at once elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and one of the secretaries of the physical section of the British Association, distinguished honours for a young man of two-and-thirty. In the following year he was appointed Fullerian Professor of Physics in the Royal Institution.

This gave him command of a magnificent laboratory with which to pursue his investigations. Faraday was then Director of the Institution, so that for the next fourteen years the two men were brought into close relations. A more delightful situation for a scientific investigator can hardly be imagined. It was in 1851 and 1852, just as this career of work in London was beginning, that Tyndall became acquainted with Spencer, who, as already observed, was about his own age, and with Huxley, who was five years younger. This was the beginning of friendships of the most intimate sort; the mutual respect and affection between the three was always charming to contemplate. On all sorts of minor topics they were liable to differ in opinion, and they never hesitated a moment about criticising or attacking each other. The atmosphere of the room in which those three men were gathered was not likely to be an atmosphere of monotonous assent; the enlivening spice of controversy was seldom far away; but the fundamental harmony between them was profound, for all cared immeasurably more for truth than for anything else. It was no small intellectual boon in life, no trifling moral support, for either of those men to have the friendship of the other two.

Of Tyndall's original scientific work, an important part related to the explanation of the causes and nature of the motion of glaciers. His contributions to this difficult and important subject were of the highest value. These investigations led him to visit the Alps almost every year from 1856 until the close of his life, though long before the end the views set forth by him in 1860 had come to be generally accepted. The explorations in the Alps gave Tyndall a fine opportunity

to indulge his propensity for climbing. It was not at all difficult to imagine him descended from a creature arboreal in its habits. He was very strong in the arms and fingers, while his weight, I should think, could hardly have exceeded one hundred and thirty, or at most one hundred and forty pounds. He would scamper up steep places like a cat. One of the Cunard captains told me that once when Tyndall crossed the ocean in his steamer, he had secured special permission to climb in the rigging, and seemed never so much at home as when slipping up between crosstrees or hanging upon a yard-arm.

In 1867, on Faraday's death, Tyndall succeeded him as Director of the Royal Institution, and soon afterward began his remarkable series of inquiries into the cause of the changing colours of the ocean. This led to inquiries into the light of the sky, and the discovery that its blue colour is due to the reflection of certain rays of light from the tiny surfaces of countless particles of matter floating in the atmosphere. This opened the door to studies of the organic matter held in suspension in the atmosphere, and to the relations between dust and disease, a most fruitful subject. In the course of these studies occurred the famous controversy on Spontaneous Generation, in which Dr. Bastian contended that sundry low forms of life detected in hermetically sealed flasks must have been newly generated from organizable materials within the flask; against which view Tyndall proved that no one has yet sealed a flask so hermetically that germs cannot enter. It was the same question which had been argued in France between Pouchet and Pasteur; but Tyndall's researches strengthened the case against

spontaneous generation, and materially helped the new and epoch-making germ theory of disease.

Another grand division of Tyndall's work relates to radiant heat. His work on this subject began in 1859, and was kept up during the greater part of his life. Perhaps the most important part of it was comprised in his researches on the transmutation of the dark heat rays below the red end of the spectrum and their relations to the luminous rays. But upon these and sundry points in optics and acoustics to which Tyndall made notable contributions I do not feel competent to speak.

Among those of Tyndall's books which have a place in literature as well as in science, "Heat considered as a Mode of Motion" is doubtless the most eminent. At the time when it was published, in 1863, the doctrines of the correlation of forces and the conservation of energy were still among the novelties, and the researches of Joule, Helmholtz, and Mayer, which had done so much to establish them, were not generally understood. Tyndall's book came in the nick of time; it was a masterpiece of scientific exposition such as had not been seen for many a day; and it did more than any other book to make men familiar with those all-pervading physical truths that lie at the bottom of the doctrine of evolution. This book, moreover, showed Tyndall not only as a master in physical investigation, but as an eminent literary artist and one of the best writers of English prose that our age has seen.

Tyndall's other direct connections with the exposition of evolution have consisted mainly in detached statements of special points from time to time in brief

essays or lectures. The most famous of these was the Belfast Address, delivered in 1874, which created so much commotion for a short time. The cry of "materialism," which then resounded so loudly, would now, I imagine, disturb very few people. So effective was it then in some quarters that in one of Tyndall's letters I find that Cardinal Cullen appointed a three days' fast, in order to keep infidelity out of Ireland.

My *new* acquaintance with Tyndall began in 1872, when he was giving a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston. I had never been in England, but I had been in friendly correspondence with Herbert Spencer for several years, so that I found the acquaintance with Tyndall was virtually made already, and we at once became warm friends.

His success as a lecturer was complete. At first he was a little in danger from feeling in doubt as to the intellectual level of his audiences,—a doubt which has played the mischief with some British lecturers in America. The late Mr. Freeman, for example, thought it necessary to instruct his audiences in Boston and St. Louis in the rudiments of English history, and was voted a bore for his pains, when there was so much he might have said to which people would have listened with breathless interest. Tyndall received early warning to talk exactly as he would at the Royal Institution. His illustrative experiments were beautifully done, his speech was easy and eloquent, and his manner, so frank and earnest and kindly, was extremely winning. It was a rare treat to hear him lecture.

Tyndall, though far from wealthy, was always in easy circumstances and was remarkably generous. I have read scores of his business letters to Youmans and

the Appletons, since I have been writing the Life of Youmans,<sup>1</sup> and I have been struck with the fact that the question of payment never seemed to be in Tyndall's mind. Before he came over here he told Youmans that nothing would induce him to carry away a cent of American money. His one lecture season earned about \$13,000 for him, and that he left in the hands of trustees as a fund for helping the study of the natural sciences in America.

The next year I went to England and spent most of a year in London. Then I saw much of Tyndall, as well as of Spencer and Huxley. I dined with them once at their famous X Club, of which the six other members were Hooker, Busk, Frankland, Lubbock, Hirst, and Spottiswoode. As Spencer says, "out of this nine [he himself] was the only one who was fellow of no society and had presided over nothing." It was a jolly company. They dined together once a month, and the ordering of a dinner was usually entrusted to Spencer, who was an expert in gastronomy, and as eminent in the synthesis of a *menu* as in any other branch of synthetic philosophy. Tyndall abounded in good humour and was then as always one of the merriest of the party. We often met, sometimes with Clifford and Lewes, at dainty little suppers in Spencer's lodgings, or at Sunday evening teas at Huxley's, on which occasions I have known men berated as materialists to join in singing psalm-tunes. But one of the best places to hobnob with Tyndall was in his own lodgings at the top of the Royal Institution, on Albemarle Street, the rooms which had once been

<sup>1</sup> "Edward Livingston Youmans," by John Fiske. D. Appleton & Company, 1894.

occupied by Sir Humphry Davy and then by Faraday. It was always an inspiration to go there. In those days Tyndall kept bachelor's hall, and it was his regular habit, year after year, to dine with Spencer and Hirst at the Athenæum Club. But at length, in the course of his Alpine scrambles, he met the charming and accomplished lady who, in 1875, became his wife. She must have been twenty years younger than himself. She was daughter of Lord Claud Hamilton, member of a well-known Scottish family, and thereby hung a little incident which used to make us all laugh. The association between Tyndall and Huxley long ago became in some people's minds so close as to identify the one with the other. So when Huxley and his wife, who had been married nearly thirty years and had seven children, came to America in 1876, one of the New York papers gravely heralded the arrival of Huxley with his titled bride!<sup>1</sup> And this sort of blunder is not peculiar to America. In a recent letter, Huxley tells me that since Tyndall's death he has read in a religious paper an obituary notice in which he [Huxley] figures instead of his friend, and is roundly vituperated for his flagrant heresies.

The last time I ever saw Tyndall was when I was last in England, in 1883. He was then living with his wife in those same old rooms at the Royal Institution, and there I dined with them and spent several evenings.

<sup>1</sup> This incident is mentioned in "Reminiscences of Huxley," p. 200.



## **IX**

# **EVOLUTION AND THE PRESENT AGE**



## IX

### EVOLUTION AND THE PRESENT AGE


It has now for many years been a matter of common remark that we are living in a wonderful age, an age which has witnessed extraordinary material and intellectual progress. This is a mere commonplace, but it is not until we have given some close attention to the facts that we realize the dimensions of the truth which it expresses. The chief characteristics of the nineteenth century may be said to have been on the material side the creation of mechanical force, and on the intellectual side the unification of nature. Neither of these expressions is quite free from objections, but they will sufficiently serve the purpose. When we consider the creation of mechanical force, it is clear that what has been done in this direction since the days of James Watt marks an era immeasurably greater than that of the rise or fall of any historic empire. It marks an era as sharp and bold as that era which witnessed the domestication of oxen and horses far back in the dim prehistoric past. Man was but a feeble creature when his only means of carriage was his two feet, and his tools were such as a wooden stick for a crowbar and a stone for cracking nuts, and his diet was limited to fruit and herbs, or such fish as he could catch in shallow waters and devour without cooking. Countless poets have celebrated the day when he first learned how to strike a spark from the stone and kindle a fire.

The remembrance of it, indeed, hovers over many a system of ancient mythology, where the Prometheus who brings to mankind the good gift of fire is apt to be associated with the Dionysus who teaches him how to ferment his drinks. A great step forward it was when the invention of the bow and arrow enabled him to slay his foes at a distance, and greatly increase his supply of game; another great step it was when the water-tight baskets, and still better, the kettle of baked clay, enabled him to boil his roots and herbs, his fish and flesh; all these were stages in progress that mark long eras in that remote past which we call the Stone Age.

During all those weary stages man could control only such mechanical force as was supplied by his own muscles, eked out here and there by the rudest forms of lever and wedge, roller and pulley, such as are found in the absence of tools, or perhaps by the physical strength of his fellow-men, if he were so fortunate as to control it. But a time came when man learned how to turn to his own uses the gigantic strength of oxen and horses, and when that day came it was such an era as the world had never before witnessed. So great and so manifold were the results of this advancement, that doubtless they furnished the principal explanation of the fact that the human race developed so much more rapidly in the eastern hemisphere than in the western. In my book on the Discovery of America, I have shown that at the time when the western hemisphere was visited by the Europeans of the sixteenth century after Christ its foremost races, in the highlands of Mexico, Central America, and Peru, had in respect of material progress reached a point

nearly abreast of that which had been attained in Egypt and Babylonia, perhaps seven thousand or eight thousand years before Christ; and this difference of nine or ten millenniums in advancement can be to a very considerable extent explained by the absence of horses and oxen in the western hemisphere. If such a statement surprises you, just stop and consider what an immense part of our modern civilization goes back by linear stages of succession to the era of pastoral life, that state of society which is described for us in the book of Genesis and in the Odyssey; then try to imagine what the history of the world as we know it would have been without that pastoral stage. But I must not tarry over this point. Another great stage was marked by the smelting of iron, and yet another by the invention of writing; the latter being on the intellectual side of progress an equivalent for the acquisition of ox and horse power on the material side.

Now this invention of writing seems very ancient, for the city of Nippur contains tablets which may be eight thousand or nine thousand years old, yet which are perfectly legible for modern scholars. The interval is not a long one when measured by the existence of the human race, yet it naturally seems long to our untaught minds because it includes and contains the whole of recorded human history. Here we come upon one of the things which the doctrine of evolution is doing for us. It is altering our perspective; it is teaching us that the whole of recorded history is but a narrow fringe upon the stupendous canvas along which the existence of humanity stretches back; and thus it is profoundly modifying our view of man in his relations to the universe.



Be it long or short, the next epoch-marking change experienced by mankind after the dawn of civilization was the invention of the steam engine by James Watt. The impulse to this stupendous invention was given by Joseph Black's discovery of latent heat, one of the first long strides that was made into the region of molecular physics. From Black and Watt down to the latest discoveries in electricity there has been an unbroken sequence of achievement, and its fundamental characteristic has been the creation of mechanical force or motor energy. This has become possible through our increased knowledge of the interior constitution of matter. Having learned something about the habits and proclivities of atoms and molecules, we are taking advantage of this knowledge to accumulate vast quantities of force and turn it in directions prescribed by human aims and wants. This may properly be called creation, in the same sense that a poem or a symphony is created. We apply the qualities of matter to the achievement of results impossible save through the intervention of man.

The most striking fact about this voluntary creation of motor energy is the sudden and enormous extension which it has given to human power over the world in innumerable ways. It has been well said that our world at the present day is much smaller and more snug than the world in the time of Herodotus, inasmuch as a man can now travel the whole length of the earth's circumference in less time than it would have taken Herodotus to go the length of the Mediterranean, and not only in less time, but with much less discomfort and peril and with fewer needful changes of speech. This is very true, but it could not have been said a

hundred years ago. The change has occurred close upon our own time.

When the postal service was inaugurated between New York and Boston in 1673 by Governor Lovelace, it took a month to cover the distance on horseback, and people were fain to be content with letters and news a month old. Midway between that time and the present, in the days when a group of statesmen assembled at Philadelphia were framing our federal constitution, the distance between New York and Boston had been reduced from a month to a week, and a single stage-coach starting daily from each end of the route sufficed for all the passengers and all the freight between the two cities except such bulky freight as went by sea. Now the fact that we can go from New York to Paris or to Vancouver Island within the compass of a week brings with it many far-reaching consequences. Politically, it gives to a nation like our own, spread over three million square miles of territory, such advantages as were formerly confined to small states like the republics of ancient Greece, or of Italy and the Netherlands in the Middle Ages. It is perpetually bringing people into contact with new faces, new climes, new forms of speech, new habits of thought, thus making the human mind more flexible than of old, more hospitable toward new ideas, more friendly to strangers. But these are not the only effects. Not only have numerous petty manufactures, formerly carried on in separate households, given place to gigantic factories, but the organization of every form of industry has been profoundly modified by railways and telegraphs. It becomes easier in many instances to do things directly that would once have been done by proxy, or, if

agencies are resorted to, they can be established where once they would not have paid; materials are employed which the cost of transportation would once have made inaccessible; great commercial houses at distant points supersede small ones near at hand, while vast sections of farming and grazing country are brought near to metropolitan markets thousands of miles off; and thus in these various ways the tendency is to specialize industries in the places where they can best be conducted. The net result is a marked increase in the comfort of the great mass of people. A given amount of human effort can secure a much greater number of the products of industry, so that life is on its material side variously enriched.

But there are other ways of creating motor energy besides utilizing the expansive force of steam. Almost hand in hand with the development of the steam engine has gone the progress of electric discovery from Galvani and Volta to Faraday, calling into existence a number of astounding inventions and introducing us to a new chamber in the temple of knowledge of which we have doubtless barely crossed the threshold. I need not enlarge upon the telephone, the phonograph, the use of electricity for lighting and heating, but a word may be said concerning electricity as a source of motor power on a great scale. What would men have said a century ago to the idea of harnessing the stupendous gravitative force of Niagara Falls into the service of manufactories in the city of Buffalo, simply by turning it into electricity and distributing it on wires over miles of country? Yet at that time one of the greatest of American thinkers, Benjamin Thompson of Woburn, better known as Count Rumford, was leading the way



toward the establishment of the theory upon which that mighty achievement rests, the theory of the correlation of forces, or rather, perhaps, of the transformableness of modes of molecular motion, which is to-day the fundamental truth upon which the doctrine of evolution is based.

I spoke a moment ago of the great historic importance of the domestication of oxen and horses. The essential feature of the present day is that instead of borrowing motor energy from these noble and beneficent creatures, we manufacture it through deft manipulation of the forces of inorganic matter. Already the time is visibly approaching when the muscular strength of horses and oxen will be among the least of their uses to man. The number of horseless carriages that one meets on the street increases day by day; and electric cars, even in their present clumsy stage of development, are doing much to modify the face of things. One of the first effects of railways was to centralize industries and enable a greater number of people to live upon a given area; and hence one of the characteristic features of the century, by no means confined to America, has been the unprecedented increase in the size of cities. Now a visible effect of the short-distance electric tramway is to aid the diffusion of city populations over increasingly large suburban areas. The result will doubtless be to enhance alike the comfort of the town and the civilization of the country.

Yet another method of creating motor energy is through chemical processes, one of the earliest of which was the invention of gunpowder four centuries ago; but at the close of the eighteenth century a new era set

in and chemistry entered upon a career of achievement too vast for the imagination to compass. In my own mind familiarity has not yet begun to deaden the feeling of stupefied amazement when I reflect that scarcely a century has elapsed since Dr. Priestley informed mankind of the existence of oxygen. At the present day man has created in the laboratory more than one hundred thousand distinct substances which never existed before and never would have come into existence but for the human mind. We are now able to deal with one hundred thousand kinds of matter which were absent from the world of our great-grandfathers. These new material creations have their properties, like other kinds of matter. They react upon incident forces, each after its peculiar manner. They are useful in countless ways in the industrial arts, they furnish us with thousands of new medicines, and here and there they enable our spiritual vision to penetrate a little farther than formerly into the habits and behaviour of the myriad swinging and dancing atoms that taken together make the visible world.

I have said enough for my present purpose about that creation of motor energy, alike in regard to masses and in regard to molecules and atoms, which is the leading characteristic of the present age on its material side. We have now to consider what I called its chief characteristic on the intellectual or spiritual side, namely, the unification of nature. I said at the outset that this phrase is not altogether satisfactory, and perhaps we might substitute for it the doctrine of evolution. At all events, I wish to point out that the doctrine of evolution amounts to pretty much the same thing as the unification of nature. In order to illustrate

my meaning, let us consider a few familiar incidents in the history of scientific discovery.

Every achievement in science has consisted in pointing out likenesses that had before remained undetected. Every scientific inquirer is on the lookout for such likenesses. If the likeness assigned be a wrong one, we have false science. For example, in order to account for the movement of the starry heaven from east to west, some of the ancient astronomers fancied that the earth was encompassed by a revolving crystalline sphere in which countless points of light were set for the purpose of illuminating the earth during the sun's absence. Because the stars preserve the same relations of position, one to another, they were supposed to be fastened on the inside of this sphere, and in accordance with this theory we have such phrases as "fixed stars" and "firmament." Here men sought to explain the unknown by analogies with the known, but the likeness turned out to have been entirely mistaken. The merit of the Newtonian astronomy was that it found in the known world the correct likeness to that which was going on in the unknown world. Copernicus had shown that it is not the earth, but the sun, which forms the centre of the planetary system; Kepler had gone on to show that the planets revolve about the sun in ellipses and in accordance with certain laws of motion which he described; the question remained, Why do the planets move in this way? Does each one have a guardian angel to pull it or push it along, or must we perhaps give up the case without any explanation? Then Newton came and showed that what happens in the sky is just what happens on the earth. The earth pulls the moon exactly as it pulls the falling apple;

and the moon does not fall simply because its momentum keeps it as far away as it can get, exactly like a pebble whirled at the end of a string. It remained to show that the force of the pull varied directly with the mass of the bodies, and inversely, with the squares of their distances apart; and then it became necessary to know that the planetary motions thus produced would agree with what Kepler had shown them to be. The successful accomplishment of this task remains to-day the great typical instance of a perfect scientific discovery. It is further memorable as the first successful leap of the human mind from the earth on which man treads into the abysses of celestial space. Be it observed that what Newton did was to show that throughout the world of the solar system certain things go on exactly as they do in your own parlour and kitchen. Whether it be in the next street or out on the farthest planet, it is equally true that unsupported bodies fall and that things whirled try to get away.

I say, then, that Newton's discovery was a great step toward the unification of nature; it was the first decisive step in the demonstration that the universe is not one thing here and another thing there, but is animated by a principle of action that yields similar results wherever you go. Newton expressed his law of gravitation in terms that were universal, and there can be no doubt that he believed it to hold true of the stellar regions; yet it is only within the present century that the correctness of this latter opinion has been proved by direct observation. We may now safely affirm that the whole stellar universe conforms to the law of gravitation, but we can also go much farther than this. The wonderful discovery of spectrum analysis by Kirchhoff and Bunsen

in 1861 has shown that the whole stellar universe is made up of the same chemical materials as those with which we are familiar upon the earth. A part of the dazzling brilliance of the noonday sun is due to the vapour of iron floating in his atmosphere, and the faint luminosity of the remotest cloud-like nebula is the glow of just such hydrogen as enters into every drop of water that we drink. But this is not quite the whole story. The study of spectrum analysis has shown that the most deeply individual and characteristic attribute of any substance whatever is the number and arrangement of the lines and bands which it makes in the spectrum. You cannot say of iron that it is always black, for you have often seen it red, and occasionally, perhaps, white; nor can you say that it is always cold or hard; and if it has weight invariably, that is no more than can be said of other things besides iron. But whether black or white, hot or cold, smooth or rough, hard or soft, iron is that substance which when heated till it is luminous, always throws upon the spectrum the same elaborately complicated system of lines and bands, which are different from those that are thrown by any other substance. The revelations of the spectroscope therefore show that in all parts of the universe the interior constitution of matter is the same, and that its manifestations in the forms of light and heat are of the same character and conformable to the same physical laws. There is not one science of mechanics for the earth, or one kind of optics for Sirius, or one law of radiation for Jupiter, but from end to end of the visible universe the same laws hold sway and the fundamental principles of action are the same.

Not only is it true that the same physical laws hold

good throughout all space, but also throughout all time, as far as the farthest stretches of space and time that science can reveal to us. These are points of singular interest, inasmuch as our solar system is by no means stationary in the universe. It has long been known that our sun is flying through space with enormous velocity toward the region which we call the constellation Hercules, carrying with him his attendant planets with their moons. The revolving year, therefore, never brings us back to the place where it found us, but to a point many millions of miles distant. Is there not something rather thrilling in the thought that we are never staying in a familiar spot, but always plunging with a speed more than a thousand times as great as that of an express train through black and silent abysses never before revealed to us? Such being the case, it is interesting to be assured that no matter how long this continues, we may depend upon the beneficent uniformity of nature's processes. The mariners of four centuries ago, who urged their frail ships down the Senegambian coast toward the equator, were sometimes assailed with fears lest they should suddenly come into some boiling sea, where clouds of scalding steam would engulf them. But that unification of nature toward which modern science has led us quite removes the fear that, in the future wanderings of our earthly habitat, we are likely to encounter any other conditions than those that have prevailed throughout the past.

The unification of nature in point of time has been the work of the nineteenth century and especially of its geologists. When it was first proved that the age of the earth is not six thousand years, but many mill-

ions, there was a tendency to suppose that in earlier ages the agencies at work in modifying the earth's surface must have been far more violent than at present. It was quite natural that people should think so. The changes which geology revealed were apt to be mighty changes ; layers of strata many miles in area wrenched out of place and perhaps turned up on edge, erratic blocks of stone carried thousands of miles from home in glaciers more than a mile in thickness, long stretches of sea-coast torn away by the restless waves, mountains bearing on their summits the telltale evidences that they had once been submerged in the ocean ; all these things seemed to speak of gigantic displays of force like the wanton play of Titans and Asuras in the ancient mythologies. Still more was this view impressed upon the mind as the wonders of paleontology became gradually revealed to us. Here we were shown a succession of past ages, during which the aspect of things was totally different from what it is now. There was, for example, the age when the great coal measures were deposited, characterized by a dense and suffocating atmosphere, with vegetation generally as exuberant as that of modern Brazil, with colossal tree ferns abounding, but not a single deciduous tree or flowering herb in existence. That Carboniferous age had its day and vanished, leaving its vegetable wealth locked up in the bowels of the earth to heat the houses and propel the engines of men in this age of ours. By and by there was a Jurassic age, when reptiles were the lords of creation, the bulkiest animals ever seen upon earth, yet with brains too small to do more than guide their clumsy movements. Those were the days when the Atlanto-

saurus, with body one hundred feet long and tail as stout as a ship's mast, dragged his unwieldy length over the plains of Montana, while in every latitude and clime you would come upon similar cold-blooded dinosaurs, sometimes bigger than elephants, sometimes as small as mice, stalking through the landscape or burrowing underground, sitting upright, kangaroo fashion, with heads near the tree-tops, flying about in the gloaming with bat-like wings like a schooner's mainsail, or sailing in the seas with long crane-like necks reared aloft above the water. Those were long days, but they too passed, and the years are millions since the last dinosaur perished. And then, to mention just one more, we are introduced to an Eocene world, about which the most striking things are the appearance of deciduous trees alongside of the evergreens, the vast and varied development of beautiful forms and colours simultaneously in the insect world and in the world of flowers, and lastly, the presence of sundry queer-looking, warm-blooded mammals calculated to produce in an observer the state of mind of old Polonius, for one would seem like a pig were it not also something like a small donkey, another would seem about midway between cat, rabbit, and monkey, all of them being generalized types which have since been variously specialized. I need not add that these creatures, too, are all gone.

Now in view of such repeated and wholesale destruction of life, it was not strange that the geologists of a hundred years ago should have imagined a succession of dire catastrophes involving a large part or the whole of the earth's surface. It was supposed that the beginning and end of every great geologic period



such as the Carboniferous or the Jurassic or the Eocene, here selected for mention, were characterized by such catastrophes, which swept from the face of the earth all existing forms of life. It was supposed that the introduction of a new geologic period was marked by a fresh introduction of living beings through some inexplicable act of wholesale creation. There were plenty of facts, indeed, which did not harmonize with this view, such, for example, as the continuous existence of a certain kind of shell-fish known as trilobites through many successive geologic periods. The theory of catastrophes appeared to demand the assumption that these trilobites were wiped out and created over again half a dozen times; which was rather a shock to men's acquired notions of probability.

The complete overthrow of this doctrine of catastrophes was effected by Sir Charles Lyell, whose great book was published in 1830. The difficulty with the catastrophizers was that while talking glibly about millions of years, they had not stopped to consider what is meant by a million years when it takes the shape of work accomplished. Suppose you were to go to the Grand Cañon of the Colorado River, and stand upon the fearful brink of the gorge, where it is more than a mile in depth, looking down at the stream like a tiny bright ribbon at the bottom, and were told that this stream is wearing off from its rocky bed about one-tenth of an inch every year, how your mind would feel staggered in the attempt to estimate the length of time it must have taken to excavate the whole of that mighty gorge! Your first impulse would certainly be to speak of quadrillions of years, or something of the sort; yet a simple calculation shows that one million

of years would much more than suffice for the whole process. Now all over the globe the myriad raindrops, rushing in rivers to the sea, are with tireless industry working to obliterate existing continents, and the mean rate at which they are accomplishing this work of denudation seems to be about one foot in three thousand years. At this rate, and from the action of rivers alone, it would take just about two million years to wear the whole existing continent of Europe, with all its huge mountain masses, down to the sea level.

It was the application of such considerations by Sir Charles Lyell to the great problems of geology, taken up one after another, that revolutionized the whole study of the earth's surface. It soon became clear that the great catastrophes were entirely unnecessary to account for the effects which we see; and for the first time in the history of human thought we had brought before us, on the most colossal scale, the truth that there is nothing in the universe which accomplishes so much as the incessant cumulative action of tiny causes. This great thought has a significance that is manifold and far-reaching; it penetrates the moral world as well as the intellectual, and when thoroughly grasped, it affects the conduct of our lives as powerfully as the direction of our thoughts. It affords a suggestive commentary upon that sublime scene in the Old Testament which suggested to Mendelssohn the greatest of his works, the scene in which Jehovah reveals Himself, not in the fire nor the earthquake nor the tempest, but in the still, small voice.

This theory of Lyell's was at first known as Uniformitarianism as contrasted with Catastrophism. It has everywhere won the field, but with sundry qualifi-

cations and explanations. It is not believed that the earth's surface was always so quiet as at present, because it is an accepted opinion among men of science that the earth was once a vaporous body immensely hotter than at present and to some extent self-luminous, as Jupiter and Saturn are to-day. Such a state of things was a state of more or less curious commotion such as may now be witnessed upon the surfaces of those planets which are so big that they still remain hot. Obviously, the cooling of the earth's surface, with the formation of a crust, must have entailed increasing quiet, and it was of course not until long after the formation of a solid crust with liquid oceans that organic life could have begun to exist. Even after the introduction of plants and animals, the energies of the heated interior, imperfectly repressed, broke forth from time to time in local catastrophes upon the surface, though doubtless never in one that could be called universal.

In early geologic ages there were doubtless earthquakes and floods more violent than any recorded in history, but the chief agencies of change were the quiet ones, and in general, if at any time you had visited the earth, you would have found a peaceful scene where gentle showers and quickening sunshine coaxed forth the sprouting herbage, with worms crawling in the ground and quadrupeds of some sort browsing on the vegetation, and never would there just come a time when you could say that the old age had gone and a new one succeeded it. How does one generation of men succeed another? The fathers are not swept away in a body to make room for the children, but one by one the old drop off and the young come on till a

day is reached when none of those remain that once were here. How does some form of human speech become extinct? About a hundred years ago an old lady named Dolly Dentreath died in Cornwall. She could speak the Cornish language; after her death there was nobody that could. Thus quietly did the living Cornish language become a dead language; and in a like unobtrusive manner have been wrought most of the new becomings which have changed and are changing the earth.

The net result of all this study was that the same kind of forces were at work a hundred million years ago that are at work to-day, and that the lessons gained from our familiar experiences may safely be applied to the explanation of phenomena the most remote in time as well as in space. In a still more striking degree was this exemplified in the researches of Darwin. When it became clear that there had been no universal catastrophes, it was also clear that the persistence of trilobites and other creatures unchanged through successive periods simply showed that they had existed all the time because the conditions happened to be favourable. But then it was further noticed that where in some given territory one geologic period follows another, the creatures of the latter period resemble those of the earlier much more closely than the creatures of some distant region. Thus, through many successive periods South America has abounded in animals of the general types of armadillo, sloth, and ant-eater. For example, although the change from the megatherium of the Pliocene age to the modern sloth is greater than the change from a Bengal tiger to kitty that purrs on the hearth, yet after all the megatherium

is of the sloth type. But if megatherium was once annihilated by some grand convulsion, after which a fresh creation of mammals occurred in South America, why should a sloth occur among the new creations rather than a kangaroo or an elephant? For a while the advocates of special creations had their answer ready. They said that every animal is best suited to the conditions in which he lives, that he was created in order to fit those conditions; therefore God has repeatedly created anew the sloth type of animal in South America because it has all along been best fitted to the conditions to which animal life is subjected there. But this ingenious argument was soon overthrown. It is true that every animal is more or less adapted to the environment in which he lives, for otherwise he would at once become extinct; but in order to determine whether he is best adapted to that environment, it remains to be seen whether he can maintain himself in it against all comers. Now in a great many instances he is far from able to do this. New Zealand grass is fast disappearing before grass introduced from Europe, and the marsupials of Australia are being surely and steadily extirpated by the introduction of species with widely different structure but similar habits. Thus the marsupial rodent is vanishing before the European rat even faster than the native black fellow is vanishing in presence of Englishmen.

Now if the Creator followed the rule of putting wild species only in the habitats best suited to them, He would have put the European rat in Australia, and not the marsupial rodent. This illustration shows how far the old style of explanation failed to suit the facts.

It is now understood that one of the principal factors in establishing a high degree of vitality has been competition for the means of supporting life. In the great continental mass of Europe, Asia, and Africa the forms of life have been most numerous and the competition has been keenest; hence life, both animal and vegetable, has been more strongly developed than elsewhere; creatures have been produced that are tougher and more resourceful than in other places; they have the peculiar combinations of qualities that enable their possessors to live more highly developed. Second in this respect comes North America; then, very far below it, because more isolated, comes South America; lowest of all, because most isolated, comes Australasia.


Australian man is the lowest of the human species, not having risen to the bow-and-arrow stage; the Maori of New Zealand, a high type of barbarian, is not indigenous, but a comparatively late arrival; in its natural history generally Australasia has only reached a point attained in the northern hemisphere two or three geological periods ago. In the chalk period marsupials abounded in Europe, but they were long ago extinguished by placental mammals of greater vitality, and the same thing is now happening in Australasia. The true reason for the resemblance between any fauna and its predecessors in the same area is that the later forms are the slightly modified descendants of the earlier forms. Thus there arose the suspicion that the millions of separate acts of creation once thought necessary to account for the specific forms of plants and animals were as unnecessary and improbable as the series of convulsions formerly imagined as the causes of geological change. What could those

acts of creation have been? Let us try to imagine one. We need not dread too close an approach to detail. This is a world of detail; details, in short, are what it consists of. Try, then, to imagine the special creation of a lobster. Was there ever a particular moment when the protein-molecules spontaneously rushed together from all points of the compass and aggregated themselves into a complicated system of tissues, fleshy, fatty, vitreous, and calcareous, and furthermore took on the forms of divers organs, digestive, sensitive, and locomotive, until that marvellous creature, the lobster, might have been seen in his perfection where a moment before there was absolute vacancy? One may not say that such a thing is impossible, but it surely does not commend itself to the modern mind as altogether probable. Yet in what other way we are to think of special creation is not easy to point out, unless we are prepared to assent to the negro preacher who graphically described the Creator as moulding Adam out of damp clay and setting him up against the fence to dry. The advocates of special creations naturally shrank from attempts to clothe their hypothesis with details, and deemed it safer, as well as more reverent, to relegate it into the regions of the unknown.

Now what Darwin did was the same sort of thing that Newton and Lyell had done. He asked himself if there was not some simple and familiar cause now operating to modify plants and animals which could be shown to have been in operation through past ages; and furthermore, if such a cause could not be proved adequate to bring about truly specific changes. We are familiar with the production of new breeds of

horses and cattle, pigeons and fowl, and countless fruits and flowers, through human agency. How is this done? Simply through selection. I need not follow the steps by which Darwin reached his conclusions. Selection by man could not account for the origin of species, but the leap of inference which Darwin took from human selection to natural selection, the masterly way in which he proved that the survival of favoured individuals in the struggle for existence must operate as a process of selection, incessant, ubiquitous and unavoidable, so that all living things are from birth to death under its sway; this was of course one of the most memorable achievements of the human mind. It was in the highest sense poetic work, introducing mankind to a new world of thought. But let us not fail to observe that its scientific character lay in its appealing to familiar agencies to assist in interpreting the unknown. Just how far Darwin's theory of natural selection covered the whole ground of the phenomena to be explained is still a question. I believe the ultimate verdict will be that it was far from covering the whole ground; but it covered so much ground, it was substantiated and verified in such a host of cases, as to win general assent to the doctrine of evolution which had before 1860 been accepted only by a comparatively few leading minds.

In this connection let me for the thousandth time point out the fallacy of the common notion that we owe to Charles Darwin the doctrine of evolution. Nothing of the sort. On the other hand, there were large portions of the general theory of evolution which Darwin did not even understand. His theory of descent by modifications through the agency of





natural selection was an immensely important contribution to the doctrine of evolution, but it should no more be confounded with that doctrine than Lyell's geology or the Newtonian astronomy should be confounded with it.

If Herbert Spencer had not lived in the nineteenth century, although the age would have been full of illustrations of evolution, contributed by Darwin and others, yet in all probability such a thing as the doctrine of evolution would not have been heard of. What, then, is the central pith of the doctrine of evolution? It is simply this: That the changes that are going on throughout the universe, so far as our scientific methods enable us to discern and follow them, are not chaotic or unrelated, but follow an intelligible course from one state of things toward another: and more particularly, that the course which they follow is like that which goes on during the development of an ovum into a mature animal. This, I say, is the central pith of the doctrine of evolution. It started in the study of embryology, a department in which Darwin had but little first-hand knowledge. Spencer's forerunner was the great Esthonian naturalist, Carl Ernest von Baer, who published in 1829 a wonderful book generalizing the results of observation up to that time on the embryology of a great many kinds of animals. Curiously enough, von Baer called this book a "History of Evolution," although neither then, nor at any time down to his death, was he an evolutionist in our sense of the word. So far from it was he that in his later years he persistently refused to accept Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Now in studying the development of an individual


ovum as exemplified in a thousand different species of animals, von Baer arrived at a group of technical formulas so general that they cover and describe with accuracy the series of changes that occur in all these cases. In other words, he made a general statement of the law of development for all physiological species. Now Spencer's great achievement was to prove that von Baer's law of development, with sundry modifications, applies to the succession of phenomena in the whole universe so far as known to us.

Spencer took the development of the solar system according to the theories of Kant and Laplace, he took the geologic development of the earth according to the school of Lyell, he took the development of plant and animal life upon the earth's surface according to Linnaeus and Cuvier, supplemented and rectified by Hooker and Huxley, and he showed that all these multifarious and apparently unrelated phenomena have through countless ages been proceeding according to the very law which expresses the development of an individual embryo. In addition to this, Spencer furnished an especially elaborate illustration of his theory in a treatise upon psychology in which he traced the evolution of mind from the first appearance of rudimentary nerve systems in creatures as low as starfishes up to the most abstruse and complex operations of human intelligence, and he showed that throughout this vast region the phenomena conformed to his law. This was by far the profoundest special research that has ever been made on the subject of evolution, and it was published four years before Spencer had ever heard of Darwin's theory of natural selection.

In those days Spencer's attitude toward such ques-

tions was much more Lamarckian than Darwinian; that is to say, he attributed far greater importance to such agencies as the cumulative effects of use and disuse than Darwin ever did; but when Darwin's great work appeared, Spencer cordially welcomed him as a most powerful auxiliary. Spencer's next achievement was to point out some of the most essential features in the development of mankind as socially organized, and to make it practically certain that with the further advance of knowledge this group of phenomena also will be embraced under the one great law of evolution. And there was still one thing more which Spencer may fairly be said to have accomplished. The generalization of the metamorphosis of forces which was begun a century ago by Count Rumford when he recognized heat as a mode of molecular motion was consummated about the middle of the century, when Dr. Joule showed mathematically just how much heat is equivalent to just how much visible motion, and when the researches of Helmholtz, Mayer, and Faraday completed the grand demonstration that light and heat and magnetism and electricity and visible motion are all interchangeable one into the other, and are continually thus interchanging from moment to moment.

Now Spencer showed that the universal process of evolution as described in his formula not only conforms to the development of an individual life as generalized by von Baer, but is itself an inevitable consequence of the perpetual metamorphosis of energy that was detected by the great thinkers above named, from Rumford to Helmholtz. Had he only accomplished the former part of the task, his place in



the nineteenth century would have been that of a greater Kepler; as it is, his place is undoubtedly that of a greater Newton. The achievement is so stupendous that that of Darwin is fairly dwarfed in comparison. Now in Spencer's law of evolution the unification of nature is carried to something like completeness. It shows us that the truth which began to be discerned when Newton's mind took the first great leap into the celestial spaces is a universal truth. It is not to be supposed that as yet we have more than crossed the threshold of the temple of science. We have hitherto simply been finding out the way to get the first peep into its mysteries; yet in that first peep we get a steady gleam which assures us that all things in the universe are parts of a single dramatic scheme, and that the agencies concerned everywhere, far and near, are interpretable in the same way that we interpret the most familiar facts of daily life. Just how far the realization of this truth has affected the thought and life of our age in its details would be difficult to tell. It would be entirely incorrect to say that the unification of nature in the minds of thinkers of the present day is a consequence of Spencer's generalizations. The correct way of stating the case would be to say that Spencer's generalizations give us the complete and scientific statement of a truth which in more or less vague and imperfect shape permeates the intellectual atmosphere of our time.

It is not from the labours of any one thinker or from researches in any one branch of science that we get the conception of a unified nature, but it is a result of the resistless momentum of scientific inquiry during the past two centuries. Such changes in the intellectual

atmosphere often work great and unsuspected results. Take, for example, the disappearance of the belief in witchcraft. From prehistoric times down to the last quarter of the seventeenth century the entire human race took witchcraft for granted; to-day it has completely disappeared from the thoughts of educated people in civilized countries. What has caused the change? Probably no human belief has so much recorded testimony in its favour, if we consider quantity merely, as the belief in witchcraft; and certainly nobody has ever refuted all that testimony. Yet the human mind which once welcomed certain kinds of evidence has now become incurably inhospitable to them. When at Ipswich, in England, in 1664, an old woman named Rose Cullender muttered threats against a passing teamster and half an hour later his cart got stuck in passing through a gate, one of the most learned judges in England considered this sufficient proof that Rose had bewitched the gate, and she was accordingly hanged. To this kind of reasoning the whole community assented, except half a dozen eccentric sceptics. To-day you laugh at such so-called evidence, and your laugh shows that your mind has become utterly inhospitable to it. What has caused the change? Might it be Newton's law of gravitation? Directly, perhaps, no; yet in a certain sense, yes. The habit of appealing to known and familiar agencies instead of remote and fancied ones in order to explain phenomena is a habit which has been growing upon the civilized mind very rapidly since the seventeenth century, and every triumph, great and small, which that habit has achieved has helped to strengthen it in many more ways than we can detect and point out. The


swift and astonishing development of science since Newton's time, the repeated discovery of new truths, the frequent invention of new industrial devices, the often renewed triumph of mind over matter, due simply to that wholesome habit, has diffused it in more or less strength throughout all civilized communities. In short, we bring to the whole business of life minds predisposed very differently from what they were two centuries ago, and one of the results is the disappearance of witchcraft from our thoughts. It has not been crushed by a battery of arguments; it has simply been dropped out in cold neglect, as a dead political issue is dropped out of our campaign platforms without a passing word of respect.

Now with regard to some of the scientific truths, methods, and habits which I have alluded to as characteristic of the theory of evolution and its pioneers, it is obvious that they have begun to permeate the thought of our time in many directions. Take, for example, the writing of history. There was a time when historians dealt mainly in personal details, in the intrigues of courts and in battles and sieges; when the study of some conspicuous personality like Luther or Napoleon was supposed to suffice for the understanding of the historic movements of his time; when it could be said of sundry decisive battles that a contrary event would have essentially altered the direction of human development through all subsequent ages; when some writers even went so far as to declare that the biographies of all great men lumped together would be equivalent to a history of mankind. Throughout this whole school of writing you may detect that fondness for the unusual and catastrophic that used to

characterize the scientific mind when untrained in modern methods and results.

Now the past generation has seen the method of treating history quite revolutionized. In the study of political institutions and economic conditions we are endeavouring to understand the cumulative action of minute but incessant causes such as we see in operation around us. We endeavour to carry to the interpretation of past ages the experience derived from our own; and knowing that nothing is more treacherous than hasty generalizations from analogy, we devote to the institutions and conditions of past ages and our own a study of most exacting and microscopic minuteness, in order that we may guard against error in our conclusions.

The result is a very considerable revolution in our opinions of the past and our feelings toward it, while an enormous mass of facts that our grandfathers would have called insufferably tedious have become invested for us with absorbing interest. Or, to cite something more immediately practical, if you consider the projects which men have in various ages entertained for reforming society, you will find that along with inexperience goes a naïve faith that some sovereign decree or some act of parliament or some cunningly devised constitution or some happily planned referendum will at once accomplish the desired result. But cold, hard experience soon shows that sovereign edicts may be neglected, that it is far easier to make statutes than to enforce them, and that in such a delicate and complex structure as that of society the operation of laws and constitutions is liable to differ very widely from what was anticipated. The



great difficulty of securing wise legislation is illustrated by the fact that in almost all statute books, nine-tenths of the legislation comes under the class which might be introduced as an act to repeal an act. Continually we find men asserting in one breath that human nature is always the same, and in the next moment assuming that it may be extensively remodelled by some happy feat of legislation. Now the mental habits that come from a study of evolution lead us to very different views upon such matters. We can produce abundant evidence to show that human nature is not always the same, while we also recognize that it cannot be suddenly or violently modified by any governmental might or cunning. We recognize that one must not expect to take a mass of poor units and organize them into an excellent sum total. We do not imagine that a community of Hottentots would be particularly benefited by our federal constitution any more than they would feel comfortable in our clothes. Our experience makes us feel that human nature admits of very considerable improvement, but that this can be effected only through the slow and cumulative effect of countless reactions of individual experience upon individual character, and that therefore while the millennium is sure to come sooner or later, it can neither be bullied nor coaxed into coming prematurely. It seems to me that this mental attitude toward social reforms has been notably strengthened and diffused within recent years.

A word must be said in conclusion about the effects of recent science upon man's view of his relation to the universe. To untrained minds in all ages the substitution of a familiar and calculable agency for one remote and incalculable has had an atheistic look, and



consequently it has had a tendency either to frighten honest inquirers or to induce their neighbours to burn them, and this state of things has undoubtedly been a drawback on the progress of mankind. It was said of Pythagoras that when he discovered his famous proposition about triangles which sixty generations of school-boys have known as the Forty-seventh in the first book of Euclid, he celebrated his discovery by sacrificing a hundred oxen to Apollo. "From that time to this," exclaims Ludwig Buechner, with a bitter sneer on his lips, "from that time to this, whenever a new truth in science is discovered, all oxen bellow with fright!" For all its brutality, there is clear pith and humour in this remark; but it does not express the proper frame of mind in which to contemplate the narrowness of the men of bygone days.

We ought so far to sympathize with them as to see that at the first glance it must have seemed very degrading to be told that man's terrestrial habitat was an attendant upon the sun and not the sun upon the earth; nor can we wonder that when Newton appealed to apple and sling, it should have occurred to many people that he was dethroning God and putting gravitation in His place. That sort of thing went on until scientific students of nature in many cases acknowledged the imputation. Being good physicists, but weak philosophers, they acknowledged the charge and retorted: "What then? No matter what becomes of religion, we must abide by the evidence before us; we must follow Truth, though she lead us to Hades." Such was the atheistic state of mind illustrated by the French materialists of the eighteenth century, and they have had a considerable following

throughout most of the nineteenth in nearly all civilized countries. One result of this state of mind was Comte's Philosophy of Positivism, which aimed at organizing scientific truths without reference to any ulterior implications, which was like the ostrich burying its head in the sand and asseverating, "There is no world save that which I see." Another form which it took was agnosticism, or the simple, weary refusal to deal with subjects inaccessible to the ordinary methods of scientific proof. Out of this mental attitude came a disposition which reached its height toward the middle of the century, to deal with sciences merely as groups of disconnected facts which men might gather and tabulate very much as boys and girls collect postage stamps. The acme of glory in science would be thus attained when you had described some weed or insect hitherto unknown or undistinguished, and were entitled to apply to it some Greek name at which Aristotle would have shuddered, with your own family name attached, in the Latin genitive case. It was this feeling which led the French Academy of Sciences some thirty years ago to elect for a new member some Scandinavian naturalist, whose name I forget, instead of Charles Darwin, inasmuch as the former had described three or four new bugs while the latter was only a constructor of theories. In the same mood I remember a discussion in a certain learned historical society as to whether the late John Richard Green could properly be called a historian, inasmuch as he had apparently neither discovered nor edited any new documents, but had only described the life of a great people.

Now one result of the unification of nature of which

I have been speaking is that this scrappy, dry-as-dust method of studying things is falling into comparative disfavour. It was a very prompt and striking result of the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" that it supplied a new stimulus to all the naturalists in the world. Immediately their studies of plants and animals were brought to bear upon the question, whether the facts known to them tended to prove or disprove Darwin's views; and they suddenly found that nature had become far more interesting than when studied in the spirit of the stamp collector.

But still more, the vast sweep of Spencer's inquiries has brought it home to us at every turn that the ostrich method of hiding our heads and pretending that we see all that there is to be seen is no longer tenable. Many a time I have heard Spencer conclude some discussion by saying, "Thus you see it is ever so; there is no physical problem whatever which does not soon land us in a metaphysical problem that we can neither solve nor elude." In this last word we have the justification for those younger thinkers who are not contented to stop just where Spencer felt obliged to. As the startling disclosures of the past century become assimilated in our mental structure, we see that man is now justified in feeling himself as never before a part of nature, that the universe is no inhospitable wandering-place, but his own home; that the mighty sweep of its events from age to age are but the working out of a cosmic drama in which his part is the leading one; and that all is an endless manifestation of one all-pervading creative Power, Protean in its myriad phases, yet essentially similar to the conscious soul within us. To these views Darwinism powerfully contributed

when it showed the ultimate welfare of a species to be the chief determining factor in selecting such modifications as would insure its survival. Darwinism certainly displaced many time-honoured theological interpretations, but at this point it brought back ten times as much theology as it ever displaced. So, too, that line of researches first set forth in my "Cosmic Philosophy," which exhibit man as the terminal figure in the long series of development, and insist upon the increasing subordination of material life to spiritual life, have the same implication. It seems to me that the most important effect which the doctrine of evolution is having is that of deepening and enlarging man's conceptions of religious truth. Forty years ago it would have seemed incredible that sectarian bitterness should have so greatly diminished and Christian charity so hopefully increased as we now see to have been the case, and I believe this is largely because in those days when science was pursued in the mood of the stamp collector, the religious world also was setting too much value upon things non-essential, attaching too much importance to the husks and integuments of religious truth rather than to its eternal spiritual essence. The change that we have seen has been in the direction of a life far higher and broader, far sweeter, more wholesome, and more hopeful than of old. And for this we have largely to thank those methods of study that are teaching us for the first time how to look upon nature as an organic whole.

**X**

**KOSHCHEI THE DEATHLESS**



## X

### KOSHCHEI THE DEATHLESS

AMONG the folk-tales which amuse our children and afford matter of speculation for philosophers, few are more widely known than the story of "The Town Musicians of Bremen," which is Number 27 of the Grimm collection, the story that tells how a party of robbers, who had cosily ensconced themselves in a house in the forest, were driven forth in a panic by the music of a quartet of beasts that brayed, barked, caterwauled, and crowed in weird and grewsome concert. The story is perhaps most generally known from the Grimm version, but it is found in one shape or another in all the Teutonic and Keltic parts of Europe. It appears as indigenous in Ireland, under the title of "Jack and his Comrades," where some features are added which bring it within the large class of stories relating to grateful beasts. Jack is the young hero who figures so conspicuously in nursery literature, who starts out to seek his fortune. He drags the ass out of a bog in which he is floundering, and afterward rescues the dog from some naughty boys who are tormenting him. The accession of the cat to the company is marked by no special adventure, but the cock is saved by the dog's prowess from the clutches of a red fox which is carrying it off. When they all reach the house in the wood, it is Jack who creeps up

to the window and discovers six robbers drinking whiskey punch. He listens to their talk, and overhears how they lately bagged a fine booty at Lord Dunlavin's, with the connivance of the gatekeeper. The house is then taken by storm, as in the German version, and when the bravest robber returns in the dark he meets with a similar ill-reception. The stolen treasure is all found secreted in the house, and next morning Jack loads it on to the donkey, and they proceed to Lord Dunlavin's castle. The treasure is restored, the gatekeeper is hanged, the faithful beasts get well provided for in the kitchen and farm-yard, and Jack marries the lord's only daughter, and eventually succeeds to the earldom.

Taken as a whole, this fantastic story may not have any consistent mythological significance, but it has certainly been pieced together out of genuine mythical conceptions. It is impossible to read it without being reminded of the lame ass in the Zend Yagna, who by his fearful braying terrifies the night monsters and keeps them away from the sacred *homa*, or drink of the gods. In the Veda this business of guarding the *soma* is intrusted not to an ass, but to a centaur or *gandharva*. The meaning of these creatures is well enough understood. The Vedic *gandharvas*, corresponding to the Greek *κενταυροι*, were cloud deities, who, among other accomplishments, were skilful performers on the kettledrum; and their musical performances, as well as the braying of the ass in the Zendavesta, appear to have represented neither more nor less than the thunder with which Indra terrified the Panis, or night robbers. The ass, indeed, plays a considerable part in Hindu mythology; and the pro-



tection of treasure and intimidation of thieves is one of his regular mythical functions.<sup>1</sup> Now when we consider the close resemblance between this function of the ass in Hindu mythology and the part which he plays in the Kelto-Teutonic legend, does it not seem altogether probable that this prominent idea in the grotesque and homely story—the idea of robbers frightened by a donkey's voice—had its origin in an Old Aryan mythical conception? If this be the case,—even without considering the other members of the quartet, albeit they have all figured very conspicuously in divers Aryan myths,—we are bound to account for the wide diffusion of the story by supposing that it is a very old tradition, and has not been passed about in recent times from one Aryan people to another.

If our view were restricted to this story alone, however, perhaps we could not make out a very strong case for it as illustrating an early community of Aryan tradition. It is no doubt possible, for example, that the story may have been originally pieced together out of mythical materials by some Teutonic story-teller, and may have been transmitted into Britain by Uncle Toby's armies in Flanders, or in any other of a thousand ways; for the social intercourse between Kelts and Teutons has always been very close. Indeed, I am inclined to think that with this particular story such was the case. In both versions the members of the quartet are the very same animals, and the sequence of events is so closely parallel as to raise a very strong presumption that one was directly based upon the other.

<sup>1</sup> See Gubernatis, "Zoölogical Mythology," I. 370-379.

Some scholars think that we may account in this way for the greater part of the resemblances among folk-tales in different parts of Europe, and in support of their opinion they allege the immense popularity, in the Middle Ages, of the versions of the Pantcha Tantra and the Seven Wise Masters. But such an opinion seems based on altogether too narrow a view of the subject. In the first place, the stories which have come into Europe through the Seven Wise Masters and the versions of the Pantcha Tantra are but a drop in the bucket, when compared with the vast mythical lore which has been taken down from the lips of the common people within the last fifty years. For the greater part of this mythical lore no imaginable literary source can be pointed out. In the second place, however practicable this theory of what we may call "lateral transmission" might seem if applied only to one legend, like the story of the donkey and his friends, above cited, it breaks down utterly when we try to apply it to the entire folk-lore of any one people. Granting that the Scotch and Irish Kelts may have learned this particular story from some German source, we have yet to remember that four-fifths of Scoto-Irish folk-lore is essentially similar to the folk-lore of Germany; and shall we say that Scotch and Irish nurses never told nursery tales until they were instructed, in some way or other, from a German source? We seem here to get very near to a *reductio ad absurdum*; but the case is made immeasurably worse when we reflect that it is not with two or three but with twenty or thirty different Aryan peoples, and throughout more than a hundred distinct areas, that this remarkable community of popular tradition occurs. Is it in any

way credible that one of these groups of people should have been obliged to go to some other group to get its nursery tales? Or, to put the question more forcibly, is it at all credible that any one group should have been so differently constituted from the rest, in regard to the making of folk-lore, that it should have enjoyed a monopoly of this kind of invention? Yet, unless we feel prepared to defend some such extreme position as this, there appears to be nothing for us to do but to admit that all the Aryan people have gone on from the outset with their own native folk-lore.

Here and there, no doubt, they have acquired new stories from one another, and the instances of such cross-transmission have probably been very numerous; but with regard to the great body of their fireside traditions we may safely assert, on general principles of common sense, that it has been indigenous. When we find that not two or three but two or three thousand nursery-tales are common to Ireland and Russia, to Norway and Hindustan, we may feel pretty sure that the gist of these tales, their substratum of genuine myth, was all contained in Old Aryan folk-lore in the times when there was but one Old Aryan language and culture.

In support of this view we have not only this general probability, sustained by the difficulty of adopting any alternative: we have also the demonstrated fact that the whole structure of Aryan speech, with the culture that it implies, however multiform it is to-day, has been traced back to an era of uniformity. Quite independently of our study of myths and legends, we know that there was once a time when a part of the common ancestors of the Englishman, the Russian,

and the Hindu formed but one single people; and we know that English words are like Russian and Hindustani words because they have been handed down by tradition from a common speech, and for no other reason, occult or plausible. Knowing this to be so, is it not obvious that the conditions of the case quite cover also the case of nursery tales? Children learn the adventures of Little Bo-Peep and Jack the Giant-Killer precisely as they learn the words of their mother tongue; and if the power of tradition is sufficient to make us say "three" in America to-day just because our ancestors said "tri" forty centuries ago in some such country as Lithuania, why should not the same conservative habit insure a similar duration to the rhymes and stories with which infancy is soothed and delighted?

Our position is further strengthened when we duly consider the significant fact that, great as is the number of entirely similar *stories* which can be brought together from the remotest corners of the Indo-European world, the number of similar mythical *incidents* is far greater. The wide diffusion of such stories as "Cinderella" and "Faithful John" is in itself a striking phenomenon. But after all, the main point is that no matter how endlessly diversified the great mass of Aryan nursery tales may appear on a superficial view, they are nevertheless all made up of a few fundamental incidents, which recur again and again in a bewildering variety of combinations. Thus the conception of grateful beasts, already noticed, appears in hundreds of stories, its simplest version being the familiar legend of Andronicus, who pulls a thorn from a lion's paw, and is long afterward spared by the same lion in the

amphitheatre. Hardly less common is the notion of a man whose life depends on the duration or integrity of something external to him, as the existence of Meleagros was to be determined by the burning of a log. The idea of a Delilah-like woman, who by amorous wheedling extorts the secret of her lover's invulnerability, is equally widespread. And the conception of human beings turned into stone by an enchanter's spell is continually repeated, from the classic victims of the Gorgon to the brothers of Parizade in the Arabian Nights.

These elements are neatly blended in the South Indian legend of the magician Punchkin, who turned into stone six daughters of a rajah, with their husbands, and incarcerated the youngest daughter in a tower until she should make up her mind to marry him. He forgot, however, to enchant the baby son of this youngest daughter, who years afterward, when grown to manhood, discovered his mother in the tower, and laid a plot for Punchkin's destruction. The princess gives Punchkin to understand that she will probably marry him if he will tell her the secret of his immortality. After two or three futile attempts to hoodwink his treacherous charmer, he confesses that his life is bound up with that of a little green parrot concealed under six jars of water in the midst of a jungle a hundred thousand miles distant. On his journey thither, the young prince rescues some eaglets from a serpent, and they reward him by carrying him on their crossed wings out of the reach of the dragons who guard the jungle. As he seizes the parrot, Punchkin roars for mercy, and immediately sets at liberty all the victims of the enchantment; but as soon as this

has been done the prince wrings the parrot's neck, and the magician dies.

From the Deccan to Argyleshire this story is told, with hardly any variation, the most familiar version of it being the Norse tale of "The Giant who had no Heart in his Body." But we are now looking at these stories analytically, and what we have chiefly to notice are the ubiquity, the persistence, and the manifold recombinations of the mythical incidents. These points are well illustrated in the Russian legend of "Marya Morevna," that is, "Mary, Daughter of the Sea." This beautiful princess marries Prince Ivan, — the everlasting Jack or Odysseus of popular tradition, whom the wise dawn goddess ever favours, and insures him ultimate success. Marya Morevna is an Amazon, like Artemis and Brynhild, and after the honeymoon is over the impulse to go out and fight becomes irresistible. Ivan is left in charge of the house, and may do whatever he likes except to look into "that closet there." This incident you have met with in the stories of "Bluebeard" and the "Third Royal Mendicant" in the Arabian Nights, and there is hardly any limit to its recurrence. Of course, the moment his wife is out of the house, Ivan goes straight to the closet, and there he finds Koshchei the Deathless, fettered by twelve strong chains. Koshchei pleads piteously for some water, as he has not tasted a drop for ten years; but after the charitable Ivan has given him three bucketfuls, the malignant giant breaks his chains like cobwebs, and flies out of the window in a whirlwind, and overtakes Marya Morevna, and carries her home a prisoner. To recount all the adventures of Ivan while seeking his wife would be to encumber ourselves too

heavily with mythical incident. He finds her several times, and carries her off; but Koshchei the Deathless has a magic horse, belonging to the same breed with Pegasus, the horses of Achilleus, the enchanted steed of the Arabian Nights, and the valiant hippogriff of Ariosto, and with this wonderful horse Koshchei always overtakes and baffles the fugitives. Prince Ivan's game is hopeless unless he can find out where Koshchei obtained his incomparable steed. By dint of industrious coaxing Marya Morevna learns that there is a Baba Yaga, or witch, who lives beyond a river of fire, and keeps plenty of mares; one time Koshchei tended the mares for three days without losing any, and the witch gave him a foal for his services. The way to get across the fiery river was to wave a certain magic handkerchief, when a lofty but narrow bridge would instantly span the stream. Here we have Es-Sirat, the rainbow bridge of the Moslem, over which the good pass safely to heaven, while the wicked fall into the flames of hell below. Marya Morevna obtained the handkerchief, and so Ivan contrived to get across the river. Now comes the grateful-beast incident. The prince is faint with hunger, and is successively tempted by a chicken, a bit of honeycomb, and a lion's cub; but on the intercession of the old hen, the queen bee, and the lioness, he refrains from meddling with their treasures, and arrives half starved at the horrible hut of the Baba Yaga, enclosed within a circle of twelve poles, on eleven of which are stuck human heads. The old hag gives him the mares to look after, with the friendly warning that if he loses a single one he needn't feel annoyed at finding his own head stuck on the twelfth pole. On each of the three

days the mares scamper off in all directions, leaving Ivan in despair; but each night they are safely driven home, first by a flock of outlandish birds, next by a lot of wild beasts, and lastly by a swarm of angry bees. In the dead of night Prince Ivan laid hands on a magic colt, and rode off on it across the fairy bridge. The Baba Yaga followed in hot pursuit, driving along in an iron mortar, brushing the trail with a broom, and sweeping cobwebs from the sky, like the "old woman, whither so high," of our own nurseries. She drove fearlessly on to the bridge, but when she was midway it broke in two, and a savage death overtook her in the fiery stream. Then all was up with Koshchei the Deathless, in spite of his surname; for straightway came Ivan and carried off Marya Morevna on his heroic steed; and when Koshchei caught up with them they just cracked his skull, and built a funeral pyre, and burned him to ashes on it.

Of the mythical incidents with which this wild legend is crowded, we must go back and pick up one or two which we could not conveniently notice on the way. We observed that Marya Morevna is like the Norse Brynhild in her character of an Amazon; she is like her also in being separated from her lover, who has to go through long wanderings and many trials before he can recover her. The theme, with many variations, is most elaborately worked out in the classic story of Odysseus, and it is familiar to every one in the Arabian tales of "Beder and Johara" and of "Kamaralzaman and Budoor." Another and more curious feature is the sudden recovery of gigantic strength by Koshchei the Deathless as soon as he has taken a drink of water. This notion is illustrated in many




Aryan tales, but in none more forcibly than in the Bohemian story of "Yanechek<sup>1</sup> and the Water Demon." A poor widow's mischievous boy having been drowned, the mother some time after succeeds in capturing the water demon while he is out of his element, roaming about on land. She drags him home to her hut, and ties him tight with a rope nine times plaited, and builds a fearful fire in the oven, which so scorches and torments the fiend that he is prevailed upon to tell her how to get down into the water kingdom and release her Yanechek. Everything succeeds until Yanechek is restored to the dry land, and learns how his enemy is tied hand and foot in the hut. Overcome with a silly desire for revenge, he runs home, picks up a sharp hatchet, and throws it at the water demon, thinking to split his head open and finish him. But the horrible fiend, changing suddenly into a huge black dog, jumps aside as the axe descends, and the sharp edge falls on the ninefold plaited rope and severs it. The dog, freed from his fetters, springs to the empty water-jug standing on the table, and thrusting in his paw succeeds in touching one wet drop that remained at the bottom. Instantly, then, the demon recovered his strength, and the drop of water became an overwhelming torrent, that swallowed up Yanechek, and his mother, and the house, and the region round about, and went off roaring down the hillside, leaving nothing but a dark and gloomy pool, which is there to this day, at that self-same spot in Bohemia, with the legend still hovering about it.

<sup>1</sup> The diminutive *Yanechek* means "Johnny." The name of the grand Bohemian actress, Fanny *Janaushek*, would seem to be equivalent to the English name "Johnson."

These examples may suffice to illustrate what is meant when it is said that the thousands of stories which constitute the body of Aryan folk-lore are made up of a few mythical incidents combined in an endless variety of ways. The perfect freedom with which the common stock of mythical ideas is handled in the different stories does not seem consistent with the notion that as a general thing one story has been copied from another, or handed over by any literary process from one people to another. On the other hand, this freedom is what one would expect to find in stories passed from mouth to mouth, careful to preserve the scattered leading motives based on immemorial tradition, but grouping the incidents in as many fresh ways as musicians in their melodies combine the notes of the scale.

That there has been a very large amount of copying and of lateral transmission I am not for a moment concerned to deny. But such lateral transmission does not suffice to account for the great stock of mythical ideas common to the civilized peoples of Europe and a large part of Asia. An immemorial community of tradition is needed for this. It has been a foible of many writers on mythology to apply some one favourite method of explanation to everything, to try to open all the doors in the enchanted castle of folk-lore with the same little key. Futile attempts of this sort have too often thrown discredit upon the study of myths and folk-tales. The subject is too rich in its complexity to admit of such treatment. In an essay written a quarter of a century ago, entitled "Werewolves and Swan Maidens," I tried to show how a great number of utterly different circumstances might combine to generate a single group of superstitions and tales.

Euhemerism was in the main an unsound theory, but it surely accounts for some things. All myths are not stories of the Sun and the Dawn, or of the Rain-cloud and the Lightning, but a great many myths are. The solar theory explains some things, distorted history explains others, reminiscences of savage custom explains others. In such complex ways, in the dim prehistoric dawn of human intelligence, divers mythical ideas originated, like the personification of the sun as an archer, or a frog, or the lightning as a snake. These simpler ideas, the rudimentary elements of folk-tales, occur all over the world and among races in widely different stages of culture. They are evidently an inheritance from very low stages of barbarism, and their possession by different and remote peoples is no proof of any community of tradition, except in so far as it shows that all civilized peoples have at some time or other passed through similar stages of barbaric thought. There is no reason why the simpler mythical ideas should not be originated independently by different people, over and over again. For example, the daily repetition of the sun's course across the sky, with very small variation, aroused men's curiosity in a very primitive stage of culture. Why should that bright strong creature always go in the same path? It was natural for savages to answer such a question by inventing stories of some ancestral warrior that once caught the sun in a net or with a big hook and forced it ever afterward to do his bidding. Thus originated the Sun-catcher myths which we find in such numbers among barbarous and savage peoples in America and Polynesia. The Greek, in his stories of Herakles performing superhuman tasks at the behest of Eurystheus, was



working with his greater wealth of fancy at exactly the same problem. But the possession in common of the conception of the Sun as a slave or thrall in no wise proves community of culture between the Greek and the Polynesian, except in so far as it illustrates how the Greek came from ancestors who at some time passed through a stage of thinking more or less like that in which the Polynesian has remained.

The resemblances between the folk-tales of civilized peoples are much closer, and enter much more into details, than the likenesses between simple mythical ideas which seem to be the common property of all races. Nobody would ever think of maintaining that the folk-tales of India and Scandinavia and Ireland had severally an independent origin. Long-continued community of tradition is the only cause which will account for the great body of the common lore.

Let us now see how the elementary mythical incidents, out of which Aryan folk-tales are woven, are in many cases to be interpreted. I said a moment ago that all folk-tales are not nature myths, but undoubtedly a good many folk-tales are. Our friend Koshchei the Deathless is a curious and interesting personage; let us see what we can make of him.


Between the Russian legend of Koshchei and the Hindu legend of Punchkin we have noted some general resemblances. Both these characters are mischief makers, with whom the hearer is not expected to sympathize, and who finally meet their doom at the hands of the much-tried and much-wandering hero of the story. Both carry off beautiful women, who coquet with them just enough to lure them to destruction. Such resemblances may not suffice to prove their

mythologic identity, but a more specific likeness is not wanting. The Russian legends of Koshchei are many, and in one of them his life depends on an egg which is in a duck shut up in a casket underneath an oak tree, far away. In all the main incidents this version coincides with the story of Punchkin, up to the smashing of the egg by Prince Ivan, which causes the death of the deathless Koshchei. There can thus be no doubt that the two personages stand for the same mythical idea. Again, we have seen that Koshchei is in his most singular characteristic identifiable with the water demon of the Bohemian tale. In several Russian legends of the same cycle, the part of Koshchei is played by a water-snake, who at pleasure can assume the human form. In view of the entire grouping of the incidents, one can hardly doubt that this serpent belongs to the same family with Typhon, Ahi, and Echidna, and is to be counted among the robber Panis, the enemies of the solar deity Indra, who steal the light and bury it in distant caverns, but are sure to be discovered and discomfited in the end. The dawn nymph—Marya Morevna, Daughter of the Sea, or whatever other name she may assume—is always true to her character, which is to be consistently false to the demon of darkness, with whom she coquets for a while, but only to inveigle him to destruction at the hands of her solar lover. The separation of the bright hero, Odysseus, or Kamaralzeman, or Prince Ivan, from his twilight bride, and his long nocturnal wanderings in search of her, exposed on the way to all manner of perilous witchcraft, which he invariably baffles,—all these incidents are transparent enough in their meaning. The horrid old witch, the Baba Yaga, is in many

respects the ugly counterpart of the more agreeable Kalypso and Kirke, or of the abominable Queen Labe in the Arabian tale of "Beder and Johara." The Baba Yaga figures very extensively in Russian folk-lore as a malignant fiend, and one prominent way in which she wreaks her malice is to turn her victims into stone. Herein she agrees with the Gorgon Medusa and the magician Punchkin. Why the fiends of darkness should be described as petrifying their victims is perhaps not obvious, until we reflect that throughout an immense circle of myths the powers of winter are indiscriminately mixed up with those of the night time, as being indiscriminately the foes of the sun god Zeus or Indra. That the demon of winter should turn its victims into stone for a season, until they are released by the solar hero, is in no wise incomprehensible, even to our mature and prosaic style of thinking. The hero who successfully withstands the spell of the Gorgon, after many less fortunate champions have succumbed to it, is the indomitable Perseus, who ushers in the springtime.

The malignant characteristics of Punchkin are thus, in the Russian tale, divided between Koshchei and his ally, the Baba Yaga. It is in this random, helter-skelter way that the materials of folk-lore are ordinarily put together. But the instinct of the story-teller is here correct enough, for he feels that these demons really belong to the same family, though he cannot point, as the scholar can, to the associations of ideas which have determined what characteristics are to be assigned them. It cannot be too carefully borne in mind that the story-teller knows nothing whatever of the ancient mythical significance of the incidents

which he relates. He recites them as they were told to him, in pursuance of some immemorial tradition of which nobody knows either the origin or the meaning. Yet in most instances the contrast between the good and the evil powers, between the god of light and warmth and comfort on the one hand and the fiends of darkness and cold and misery on the other, is so distinctly marked in the features of the immemorial myth that the story-teller—ignorant as he is of the purport of his talk—is not likely altogether to overlook it. As a general rule the attributes of Hercules are but seldom confounded with those of Cacus. Now and then, however, a confusion occurs, as we might expect, where there is no obvious reason why a particular characteristic should be assigned to a good rather than to an evil hero. In this way some of the relatively neutral features in a solar myth have been assigned indifferently to the powers of light and the powers of darkness. It seems to have puzzled Max Müller that, in the myth of the Trojan War, the night demon Paris should appear invested with some of the attributes of solar heroes. But I think it is natural that this should be so when we consider how far the myth-makers were from intending anything like an allegory, and how slightly they were bound by any theoretical consistency in the use of their multifarious materials. The old antithesis of the good and the bad has generally been well sustained in the folk-lore which has descended from the myths of antiquity, but incidents not readily thus distinguishable have been parcelled out very much at random. Bearing this in mind, we have no difficulty in understanding why the black magician's



life depends on the integrity of an egg, or some other such object, outside of him. In the legends we have been considering, it is the fiend of darkness who is thus conditioned, but, originally, it is beyond all question that the circumstance refers to the sun. Out of a hundred legends of this class, it is safe to say that ninety represent the career of the hero as bound up with the duration of an egg. And here, I think, we come close to the primitive form of the myth. This mysterious egg is the roc's egg which the malign African Efreet asked Aladdin to hang up in the dome of his palace. It is the sun; and when the life of the sun is destroyed, as when he goes down, the life of the hero who represents him is also destroyed. From this mythical source we have the full explanation of the singular fate of such personages as Meleagros, and Punchkin, and Koshchei the Deathless.

It is an odd feature of Koshchei that, while invariably distinguished as immortal, he is invariably slain by his solar adversary. But herein what have we to note save the fact that the night demon, though perpetually slain, yet rises again, and presents a bold front, as before, to the solar hero? In the mythology of the American Indians we have this everlasting conflict between the dark and the bright deities. The West, or the spirit of darkness, contends with the East, or the spirit of light. The struggle begins on the mountains, and the West is forced to give ground. The East drives him across rivers and over mountains and lakes, until at last they come to the brink of this world. "Hold!" cries the West; "hold, my son! You know my power and that it is impossible to kill me!" Nothing can be more transparent than the



meaning of all this ; and it is in just this way that the deathless Koshchei is slain again and again by his solar antagonist.

Conversely, among the incidents of the legend which we omitted as too cumbrous for citation is one in which Prince Ivan is chopped into small pieces by Koshchei, and is brought to life again only by most weird magic. What can be more obvious than that here we have the perennial conflict between Day and Night,—the struggle that knows no end, because both the antagonists are immortal ?

As for the conception of grateful beasts, who in so many legends aid the solar hero in time of need, I think it is most likely derived from a mingling together of ancient myths in which the sun himself figures as a beast. In various ancient myths the sun is represented as a horse or a bull, or even as a fish, — Oannes or Dagon, — who swims at night through a subterranean ocean from the west, where he has disappeared, to the east, whence he is to emerge. The cock is also, quite naturally, a solar animal, and his cheerful crow is generally the signal at which ghosts and night demons depart in confusion. In popular legends, in which these primitive connections of ideas have been blurred and partially forgotten, we need not be surprised to find these and other solar beasts assisting the solar hero.

The beast, on the other hand, who enlists his services in support of the powers of darkness is usually a wolf, or a serpent, or a fish. In many legends the sun is supposed to be swallowed by a fish at nightfall, and cast up again at daybreak ; and in the same way the wolf of darkness devours little Red Riding Hood, the

dawn nymph, with her robe of crimson twilight, and, according to the German version, yields her up whole and sound when he is cut open next day. But the fish who devours the sun is more often a water-snake, or sea-dragon, and we have seen that Koshchei the Deathless is connected by ties of kinship with these mythical animals. In the readiness with which Koshchei and the water fiend of the Bohemian legend undergo metamorphosis we are reminded of the classic Proteus. But in the suddenness with which their giant strength is acquired we seem to have a reminiscence of the myth of Hermes, the god of the winds in the Homeric Hymn, who, while yet an infant in the cradle, becomes endowed with giant powers, and works mischief with the cloud cattle of Apollo, retreating afterward through the keyhole, and shrinking back into his cradle with a mocking laugh. This mythical conception duly reappears in the Arabian story of the Efreet whom the fisherman releases from a bottle, who instantly grows into a gigantic form that towers among the clouds.

Thus in these curious stories, to which our children listen to-day with breathless interest, we have the old mythical notions of primitive people most strangely distorted and blended together. We may fairly regard them as the alluvial refuse which the stream of tradition has brought down from those distant highlands of mythology where our primeval ancestors recorded their crude and childlike impressions of the course of natural events. Out of the mouths of babes comes wisdom; and so from this quaint medley of nursery lore we catch glimpses of the thoughts of mankind in ages of which the historic tradition has utterly vanished.

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